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CHRISTIANITY AT THE CROSS ROADS

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BY

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PREFACE

This book is the result of a great many conferences with young men, laymen and ministers, and of much correspondence with others, who are deeply concerned over the religious controversies of recent months. Much of the controversy has failed to touch the fundamental issues. Some writers for magazines and daily papers have sought to exploit what they are pleased to call "The War in the Churches." The alarmist note has been sounded over and over again. The chief danger in the situation has been the confusing of issues. There is no way to coerce opinion in these matters, even if coercion were desirable, which it is not. What is needed is a simple and clear statement of the present status of the debate between evangelical Christianity and its opponents, in the light of a sound scientific scholarship. The following pages attempt this task. The volume makes no attempt to set forth fully the evidences of Christianity. My former volume, "Why is Christianity True?" does this. Nor is this book a discussion of doctrines in the formal sense. My book, "The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression," presents my views of doctrine. I undertake in the present volume to show

the ultimate form of the present controversy. It is really a controversy about facts: the facts of Jesus Christ, of the New Testament records, of Christian history, and of Christian experience. Now it is because it is a controversy about facts that I have not the slightest doubt or misgiving as to the outcome. The firm foundation of God standeth sure. I shall be grateful if I succeed in making this clear. I make little or no use of the current terms "modernist" and "fundamentalist" because I would like to give a view of the subject as far as possible apart from the acrimony of recent newspaper controversy.

I make no apology for using a title for the volume which has once before been used. It seems to be appropriate to the subject and I therefore adopt it.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Z. T. Cody, Editor of *The Baptist Courier,* for exceedingly valuable suggestions, given in preliminary discussions of some of the subjects treated and after the manuscript was prepared.

E. Y. M.

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CHAPTER I

THE MODERN SPIRIT

This book is a plea for the freedom of religion. The full meaning of this statement will appear as the argument proceeds. Here I may define briefly what is meant. By freedom of religion I do not mean religious freedom, although I am heartily committed to this also. The freedom of religion is a different matter. The modern spirit has acquired certain points of view in dealing with religion which imperil the freedom of religion. The vital elements of religion are so handled that their religious value disappears. The Christian faith is large and ample, going to the depths and reaching to the heights, and extending to the breadth of man's religious aspirations and needs. No criticism of it has much force when its amplitude and power, as religion, are ignored. No standard of measurement, no criterion of value which overlooks its potencies for spiritually redeeming man is of much value.

To be more specific, the tendency of current thought I am now referring to appears in many

of the estimates of God, of man, and of religion itself. God is restricted in his activity to the processes of the natural order. What he does in the world may always be explained in terms of ordinary cause and effect stated in physical terms. Man is an organism re-acting to stimuli from the world about him. His psychic and spiritual life is evolved in the course of his struggle for existence, useful for a time for certain ends. Its relation to the brain is the same as that of the whistling sound to the steam in the tea kettle when the heat causes it to boil. Religion is a useful function which rises to meet an emergency in man's life. In time he outgrows it. Intelligence enables him to dispense with it. The outcome in thought is materialism or positivism. The outcome in social theory is Nietzsche's super-man and aristocracy, or radical socialism or communism. The most impressive aspect of it now is Sovietism in Russia which is founded on atheism and deadly antagonism to religion.

There are many half-way positions between Christianity and these systems. But the gravitation of a vast amount of current religious thought is towards these levels, even where a halt is called before the goal is reached. But my present point is that the freedom of religion is imperiled. To compress faith into the cage of naturalism is to narrow and weaken and ultimately to destroy it. If the spiritual life of mankind is to find a sphere large enough to supply its needs it must re-affirm

the spiritual universe of Jesus Christ. The sort of coercion which is now being employed against the Christian faith is not the power of ecclesiastical authority with dungeon and rack, nor the power of civil government enforcing conformity. It is rather the coercion of academic opinion based upon a culture taking its rise in, and shaping its course by physical science. It is high time for religion to assert once more its freedom and insist upon its own rights.

Let no one draw a wrong inference from the preceding statements. There is no conflict between Christianity and science. The issues between our religion and its opponents must ultimately be settled by scholarship and sound canons of research. Christianity asks for no exceptional treatment at the hands of unbelievers or others. It welcomes every legitimate test. Our complaint is rather that it has been given exceptional treatment. Established canons of research have been set aside in the treatment it has received. Its problems are in many cases never presented to the reader. The facts in the background of its life are suppressed. The miraculous element in the Gospels and in the life of Jesus is dealt with by many modern writers who never take the pains to find out the sort of problem they are dealing with. They betray the grossest ignorance of the nature of the New Testament teaching on the subject. They airily dispose of the problem as if dismissing a childish fancy. And yet to those who

are thoroughly familiar with the character of Jesus Christ, his vision of God and the spiritual atmosphere and ethical passion of the New Testament, the facile solution of the problem of the supernatural offered us by naturalism seems as futile as the guess of a child that the stars are holes in the sky through which a light is shining from the other side. Things are taken out of their context and looked at in isolation and conclusions drawn. But no one can appreciate, much less judge, the New Testament in its details until he has achieved a sympathy with the spiritual universe which it discloses, and above all the Person of its supreme Actor. What Christianity asks, therefore, is not exceptional but rather fair treatment. It protests against dealing with religion on assumptions which destroy religion, and then clamping those assumptions like hand-cuffs on the wrists of the Christian faith.

The modern spirit has in it a great many admirable elements and some of an opposite character. Let us glance at these two aspects. At its best the modern spirit has a noble devotion to facts. The passion for reality, the hatred of sham, the desire to know and to proclaim the truth at all hazards—these are great traits whose value it is not easy to exaggerate. So also I note the painstaking and patient search for truth, the conscientious accuracy which, while claiming all that is warranted by the evidence, never claims more. The reserve and restraint which is careful to ab-

stain from over-statement, the modesty and humility which recognizes the unexplored ocean of truth lying beyond the limits of our present powers, are among the finest qualities of the modern spirit. The adoption of a method of investigation and conscientiously adhering to it; the application of a principle of explanation within its recognized limits, and the rigid refusal to go beyond those limits, are marks and tokens of the noblest scientific thinking. So also the respect for other departments of inquiry and other forms of knowledge is characteristic of the modern spirit in its worthy representatives. It is these fine qualities, and other similar ones, which have made possible the magnificent results of modern science. No one can fail to appreciate those achievements or to rejoice in the mighty strides in the improvement of the conditions of life which have resulted.

Now these very successes of the modern spirit and method have led to faults in some of its representatives as glaring as the virtues are praiseworthy. One of these is loss of respect for the past. There are moderns who are radicals towards everything ancient. But as some one has well said, you cannot "put a fool's cap on history." Our ancestors learned some things and transmitted them to us. We stand on the shoulders of the past. We exercise the right to review, to criticize and to correct, but this is not necessarily to annihilate. "Time makes ancient good uncouth" —yes, but not all ancient good. The poetic phrase

holds a sound principle, but does not express a scientific generalization applicable to all ancient good.

So also specialism has tended to a one-sided development. In a review of Professor Burnet's recent Romanes Lecture, Dean Inge writes: "Our learned men have become such specialists that the temple of knowledge is in danger of the fate which befell the tower of Babel, when the builders could not understand each other's language. For this or other reasons he (Professor Burnet) thinks that the growth of knowledge has been accompanied by a corresponding growth of actual ignorance, and he brings the evidence. Speaking as a teacher in a Scottish University, he is certain that the young men of to-day are absolutely and relatively more ignorant than those of forty years ago, and what is worse that they have less curiosity and intellectual independence."[1] This is rather a severe indictment of modern specialism. But it accounts for much of the current confusion about religion. Men are trying to speak the language of Christianity who have never learned it. And some are posing as experts in science who know little about it.

Again the modern spirit too easily dispenses with mystery in religion. Some one recently advertised a creed that "appealed wholly to reason and not at all to faith." A hard-headed critic at once commented: "That is just the kind of religion

[1] *Literary Digest*, January 26th, 1924, pp. 30-31.

nobody wants." Christianity has its difficult problems. Those connected with the Person of Jesus are foremost among them. But those problems were created by his action in history. If he had been merely the Jewish prophet, and on a level with other prophets, no such problems would have arisen. There would have been no Councils of Nicæa and Chalcedon. Many men deal with the problem of Christ's Person under the master motive of getting rid of mystery and difficulty. "But," says Dr. Fairbairn, "the mysteries which compose the atmosphere in which all truth lives, are too inseparable from thought to be absent from religion." Again: "The Person of Christ is exactly the point in the Christian religion where the intellect feels overwhelmed by mysteries it cannot resolve, yet where Christian experience finds the factors of its most characteristic qualities, and the Church the truth it has lived by and is bound to live for."[2]

This leads to the point that the modern spirit has an overdone tendency to simplify. It lays hold of the principle of continuity, most valid within certain limits, and makes it universal and absolute among conscious wills and personalities as well as among things. Or it takes the conception of evolution construed as an expression of the continuity principle and converts it into a philosophy of the universe as well as of lower forms. The desire to find a common denominator for all

[2] *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 5.

the facts of existence, a key to all forms of being, is of course legitimate and worthy. But you can never safely forget that life has more than one dimension. It has height and depth as well as width.

It is easy to overdo in the matter of simplifying. It easily passes into absurdity. It is like interpreting the mathematical skill of Sir Isaac Newton by means of the capacity of an educated horse, or the intellectual ability which creates a table of logarithms by means of the powers of a mathematical pig.

This proclivity of the modern spirit to excessive simplification is in deadly antagonism to another modern idea. That idea is that the universe is not static but dynamic. Things are moving. Nothing is fixed and final. All things are in flux. I am in hearty agreement with the main thought that the universe is the scene of the unfolding of a great and mighty purpose of God. We grow and develop, and the mind of man is widened by the process of the suns. But to reduce the process of nature to a level of too great simplicity is fatal to the conception of growth and development. Physical continuity, for example, as the sufficient key to the world, leaves it the dreariest place imaginable. The universe then becomes merely the successive rise and fall of waves on the ocean of being. The level is not changed and the surface looks the same after the lapse of incredible ages. No principle is introduced which enables the uni-

verse to get on a higher level. Thus the modern spirit contradicts itself. It wants and assumes incompatible goals. Unless a principle of difference is found there is no hope for the world. Uniformities and simplicities are most fascinating up to a certain point. But, if they are all, the universe is suddenly converted into the aridity and dead level of the Sahara desert. Some writer a few years ago, without intending to satirize the evolution doctrine, was pointing out its failure to explain all the facts of the world. He said it was like the conceivable generalization of a mosquito on the rim of the driving wheel of a locomotive of a moving passenger train. "Revolution, revolution, revolution, this is the law of the universe." This would be a true generalization for the mosquito, for it covered the range of his vision. So also it would be relatively true. But the track, and the train, and the engineer, and conductor, and passengers, and the destination would lie outside the range of his observation. My only point here is that we can easily overdo in our modern proclivity to simplify. We must recognize all the richness and fullness of life with its many dimensions.

Now the principle of difference is supplied and ready to our hand in the personality of man. Freedom is a fact of consciousness. To explain it as illusion is to set aside a fact by a fancy. There is absolutely no proof yet offered that it is illusion. The modern spirit has often shown

the strangest blindness to the fact and significance of human freedom and personality. Our modern scientific Diogenes with his lamp of research fails to discover man. Human personality blazes in the path of the investigator as a burning bush, but men do not go aside to see this great thing, or take the shoes from off their feet. The reason is that such recognition introduces spirit and freedom along with matter and continuity. The person is a new factor, a new note in the universe, which cannot be reduced to the visible, material and tangible. It refuses to be simplified.

Religion is man's distinctive trait. The knowledge and worship of God are characteristic of his being. Religion is irreducible to the terms of a lower level of being. There is no contradiction between religion and physical science and philosophy. But there is a marked contrast. This principle of contrast is what the modern spirit often fails to appreciate. I once saw an exhibit illustrating nature's method of protective coloring for some of her living forms: white rabbits in the snow were scarcely distinguishable from the environment. Brown birds in dry grass and green insects in the foliage of a vine were hard to see. One spontaneously admired the arrangement for these living forms below man. Conformity and not contrast was the law of their safety.

Now precisely the opposite principle applies when we reach the human level and consider man's higher interests. And yet a great many modern

writers treat religion as nature treats the rabbits and insects. They give it a color to make it conform to something else. The value of religion is its contrast with, not its conformity to, the lower values and realities. There is a large group of writers on religion like Professor Hofding, for example, for whom the religious values are "transvaluated" into something else. They are not recognized for their own worth. They are simply transition links in a chain. They will be outgrown and merged in something different. Conformity to something else, not contrast, is the regulative idea. Thus in a great section of modern thought religion is being leveled down. It is being given a protective coloring.

The strength of religion is in its contrast. It has value because it is different from other things. It applies in all relations and covers all life, but is identical with nothing else. The value of every great reality of life is its distinctiveness, its separateness, its difference, from other things. Certainly this is true of music, and painting and all art. Art is a human phenomenon inexplicable by anything else.

It is its contrast with, not its conformity to chemistry and biology that makes it worth while. The same thing is true of science and philosophy. Their value is their contrast with other things. It is preëminently true of the Christian religion. And yet there is a great chorus of modern voices demanding that it be made to conform to science

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or some other form of modern culture. We hear of "the religion of science" which means religion forced into conformity to another principle. The phrase is absurd to one who grasps the meaning of the terms religion and science.

The value of faith is that it cannot be balanced with natural law. It is different in kind. The value of hope is that it cannot be equated with continuity or any other principle taken from below man. The value of love is its distinctiveness from matter, force and motion. The significance of freedom is that it is the index and token of a moral and spiritual universe diverse from the cosmos. The value of personality is that it is the key to a universal moral kingdom of fellowship between God and man.

The action of Jesus Christ in his own time and in succeeding ages has been the bringing together of God and man in the personal fellowship of holy love. He is a creative force in the world to-day. The best elements of the modern spirit are in perfect harmony with him and his kingdom. In its less worthy phases it is directly antagonistic to him. He is the creative force of the best life of the modern world. The evangelical faith which is founded upon trust in and reverence for him holds the promise of the future. But his people must keep this religion free. They must not suffer it to be imprisoned in a cage of natural law. The contrasts of the modern situation may be summed up as follows: The contrasted values are mecha-

nism and freedom. The contrasted worlds are a closed system and our Father's house. The contrasted standards of reality are physical force and free personality. The contrasted methods are the unfolding of inherent natural forces and supernatural grace. The contrasted determining factors are mechanical causation and free causation. The contrasted goals are re-absorption of man in the cosmos and eternal life with all personal powers enhanced and glorified in a moral and spiritual kingdom.

The aim in this book is to show that in the Christian religion we have a great universe of spiritual reality which cannot be imprisoned. In Christ we have a force which is as insistent and inevitable as gravitation. But it is gracious and spiritual and personal and redemptive. One wearies of the blatant controversy which has recently made so much noise in the secular press. The superficiality and futility of much of it are manifest. And yet the current issues need to be made clear. In the open court of scholarship and sound learning our faith has nothing to fear. The characteristics, good and bad, of the modern spirit have been dwelt upon in this introductory chapter, not to create or remove a prejudice, but rather to call attention to the fact that the vague generalities which are now so widely employed to discredit our faith are not enough. To say that "modern thought" is against our faith is by no means to speak the final word. To allege that the

"modern man" demands so and so, may mean much or little according to what modern man is in mind. To cite prevailing opinion in certain academic circles does not really settle anything. Opinions come and go. It is not until we go down to the deep currents of man's spiritual life that we find the truly significant factors in the great issues now being threshed out. It is my purpose to discuss some of these in the chapters which follow.

I shall not deal primarily with theological doctrines. I am chiefly concerned here with the Christian facts. My doctrinal views are set forth in my book, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression.* The foundation of Christianity is the fact of the revelation of God to man through his Son Jesus Christ. This is the center of the conflict.

I purposely make scant use of the current terms "modernist" and "fundamentalist." Both of them have become more or less obscured by the dust of controversy. There are many jangling voices. But the really fundamental issues are not difficult to grasp. I hope the next chapter will make this clear.

CHAPTER II

FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

What are the fundamental issues in the present situation in the religious life of the world? The answer to the question has a negative as well as a positive side. On the negative side several points may be indicated. First of all, it is not an issue between two types of the evangelical Christian faith. There are such issues, of course. Men who are agreed in accepting the New Testament do not always understand it in the same way. But these men are called upon to-day to make a stand against another group who have found reasons satisfactory to themselves for repudiating the New Testament. In some instances this latter group does not formally reject the New Testament. But they so manipulate its contents that it becomes to all intents and purposes a new book.

Again, the fundamental issue is not between science and Christianity, or science and the Genesis account of creation, or science and the Bible. Christians have the deepest interest in scientific research. The religion of the New Testament presupposes indefinite human progress in knowledge. Facts can never be unwelcome to the Christian who understands his faith. Science in

its proper sense is very recent and highly technical. So-called conflicts between science and the Bible are all imaginary. The Bible is the inspired literature of religion. Science is the uninspired literature of nature. These two literatures move on different levels. They can never collide any more than an eagle flying high in the air can collide with a lion walking on the earth. The electricity that plays in a storm-cloud does not contradict the power of gravitation which pins the bowlder to the earth. These are elemental forces, each working in its own way in a harmonious world.

Again, the fundamental issue is not between a given system of doctrines which have arisen in history and modern culture. These doctrines are of very great importance for the Christian. But doctrines arise out of facts. There is history behind the doctrinal system. Christians believe in the inspiration and sufficiency and finality of the Scriptures for religious purposes. But the chief issue is not the doctrine of the inspiration or authority of the Bible. A more fundamental question concerns the reasons for believing that we have an authoritative Bible. It is at this point the attack is most dangerous. So also Christians hold very high doctrines of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. These doctrines have been discussed much during the Christian era. And they are fundamental to the group of distinctive Christian doctrines. But a more fundamental question

has to do with the sources from which we derive these doctrines. There is scarcely any controversy now as to what the New Testament teaches about Jesus Christ. Scientific exegesis has settled these questions in favor of our evangelical faith. In the field of historical and critical exegesis the battle has been won. The attack now is upon the foundations of the records themselves. Have we in the New Testament records a reliable history of events? The radical school to-day gives a negative answer to this question. It is vain for mediators and neutrals to shut their eyes to this issue. It is proposed to destroy the foundations of the Christian religion by discrediting the historical records. It is then proposed to rebuild a new religious structure on the ruins. In fact the outlines of the new structure have already appeared. In its main features it has become fixed. It is a new radical orthodoxy. The books that teach it are legion.

Stated positively the fundamental issues have to do with Facts, with Rights, and with Causes. First, what are the facts as to the Christian origins? Second, what are the respective rights of the parties to the controversy? Third, what are the spiritual causes necessary to explain the Christian movement? I will consider these in order.

First, what are the facts as to the Christian origins? This question will be answered at length in the succeeding chapters. Here it is only

necessary to show that one of the fundamental issues has to do with facts. It is most pleasing to say with the greatest emphasis, in this connection, that there is a common standing ground for Christianity and modern science. That standing ground may be summed up in three words: *loyalty to fact*. Strange as it may seem to make the statement, Huxley and Jesus employed almost identical terms in defining the scientific attitude on the one hand, and the Christian attitude on the other. You must become as a little child in the presence of the facts of nature, said Huxley. "Except ye be converted and become as a little child, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," said Jesus. A sincere desire to know facts; a spirit of patient and painstaking investigation to discover facts; courage to proclaim what is clearly proven; modesty and self-restraint in refusing to go beyond the evidence; willingness to accept evidence of an unusual kind, provided it seems genuine; unwillingness to prejudge the evidence even when it tends against one's convictions; openness to evidence bearing upon reality of any kind, physical or spiritual—these are among the qualities of the true Christian and the true scientist.

Now the defender of the evangelical faith asks for no other attitude of mind than this on the part of any inquirer or doubter. He believes that this attitude will vindicate the Christian religion in the mind of any sincere man who goes thoroughly into the evidence. He has not the slightest fear

in raising the question of fact as to the New Testament records. He is willing to apply every criterion and test which the field of investigation permits. He is prepared to accept any proved fact as to those records. He makes no effort to impose any doctrine of authority on any unwilling mind, although he accepts the authority of the New Testament on grounds entirely satisfactory to himself. But he does protest very earnestly against prejudging facts in the religious and personal realm on the basis of a world-view drawn from physical nature.

The issues as to fact concern the Person of Jesus Christ. All other issues turn upon this: "What think ye of Christ?" Was he supernatural in origin? Was he sinless in character? Did he perform miracles? Was his death on the cross an atonement for sin? Did his crucified body come forth from the grave in resurrection power? These are the crucial questions. Of course these facts are also to be interpreted. Only by interpreting them can we learn the meaning of Christianity. But the fundamental question is concerned with the facts themselves. Certain great Christian doctrines are inevitable if the facts are recognized. To deny the facts themselves is to revolutionize Christianity.

All the above questions can be reduced to one: Was there anything supernatural in the character and career of Jesus Christ? Some accept the resurrection and deny the virgin birth. Some

accept a few of the miracles and reject the others. There seems to be a feeling that the lowest possible minimum of the supernatural should be sought. At this point I am not raising any issue with the group who genuinely accept the supernatural element in the records wholly or in part. If that element is accepted at all it is a very easy step to accept all of it. This will appear in due time. It is my view that ultimately we must accept the records of the supernatural in the New Testament substantially as it stands, or else reject it as a whole. Meantime if there are people who accept it in part, we can only hope that further reflection will lead them to the logical outcome. As a matter of fact men usually proceed to total rejection or practically full acceptance. One or the other of these results seems to be inevitable.

A second fundamental issue pertains to rights. What are the rights involved in the modern controversy about religion? There are at least three great rights to be considered: the rights of science, the rights of philosophy, and the rights of religion. No one will dispute the general statement that the right of each of these is freedom to pursue its own task in its own way. Confusion and conflict arise when these tasks and the corresponding rights are forgotten. It is therefore extremely important that both tasks and rights be clearly defined. The distinctions are very clear. The difference in aim and method is not difficult to state.

The principle of investigation in each department gives a distinctive value.

Physical science deals with nature. It observes facts and phenomena. It traces sequences and causes. It explains events in nature by antecedents. It assumes continuity in all events. It rigidly limits itself to explanation in one particular way. In a word, science works with the principle of causality.

Philosophy, on the other hand, seeks to find satisfaction for the reason. It assumes the facts and data supplied by science and experience. Its chief aim is to find a single principle which will explain the universe. Modern philosophy begins with something given. The old method of beginning with an abstract principle and deducing the meaning of the universe from that is no longer in good repute. What philosophy seeks is the unity of all things. It searches, so to speak, for a cord long enough and strong enough to tie up in a single bundle all the facts of the universe. Philosophy works with the principle of rationality.

Religion differs from science and philosophy in that its chief quest is for God and salvation from sin. Religion is a personal relation. It seeks adjustment with the infinite life. It feels the burden of sin and seeks deliverance. It longs for and seeks comfort in sorrow, and surcease from pain. It yearns for and seeks light in the midst of mystery and death. Above all it seeks moral charac-

ter conformed to that of God. It seeks immortality. All this it finds in personal communion with God. Religion works with the principle of personality.

It ought to be clear that there is no conflict between science and religion, or philosophy and religion. If science works with the principle of causality, and philosophy with rationality, and religion with personality, it is evident that they pursue different tasks. All of them seek to deal with reality. All seek to know the truth. Their aims are diverse, their methods vary, the principles with which they operate are not the same. But they are harmonious and should coöperate. Of course it is not meant that there are no points of contact or overlapping of these three great human functions and activities. Religion is not irrational, science is not concerned to deny personality, and philosophy must take account of both. There is necessarily a higher unity in which some day these three will meet when their tasks are done.

It is important to note, however, the necessity of keeping in mind the diversity of aim and method. Most of the conflicts, or alleged conflicts between science and philosophy on the one hand, and religion on the other have risen from confusion as to function. When one of these has attempted to invade the sphere of the other, trouble has arisen. The case of Galileo and his persecution by the ecclesiastical powers of his day has

done heroic service for those seeking to indict religion for its invasion of the sphere of science. Undoubtedly religion has too often been guilty of unwarranted efforts to throttle investigation. Science is autonomous. It has its own laws, its own aims, its own criteria of truth and explanation. Its supreme right is freedom to investigate, to discover, to proclaim truth. Christians make a mistake when they invade the scientific sphere and seek to impose alien principles and criteria and to make demands based on unwarranted assumptions. Science must and will insist upon its own rights within its own sphere.

It is also true that science and philosophy commit an equally grievous sin when they attempt to invade the religious realm. Religion also is autonomous. It has its own methods, its own criteria of truth, its own approach to the great Reality, and its own conditions for attaining certainty. Religion as a fact is to be recognized. Religion as a fact may be the object of investigation by science and philosophy. But religion as a form of human experience cannot be made to conform to the criteria and methods of science and philosophy. The rational process might complete itself and explain the last jot and tittle of the universe, including religion, without becoming religion. This is because religion involves more than the rational process. Science might trace all the continuities of being down to the minutest phenomenon of nature. It would remain outside

of religion. All this is clear when we recall that science is a circle whose center is causality, philosophy a circle whose center is rationality, and religion a circle whose center is personality.

A third fundamental issue concerns causes. The clash of opinion is sharp and decisive at this point. Evangelicals affirm and the modern radicals deny the necessity of a gospel based upon supernatural origins as recorded in the New Testament. One group of radicals still believe in religion and try to retain the name Christian. But their plea derives all its strength from the ethical and social ideal. They take Jesus as their example in religion. They strive to imitate the spiritual consciousness of Jesus. His was the ideal religious life. Strive to be like him in filial love to God and fraternal love to man. Make his ethical and social ideals the dynamic force in civilization. Reorganize society on this basis.

This is the positive side of their propaganda. The negative refuses to accept any of the central affirmations of our faith. Jesus is not the object of religious faith. We trust God, not Jesus. We cannot with Thomas say to him, "My Lord and my God." His birth was like the birth of other men. He had a human father and mother. He did not work miracles or rise from the dead. His death was not an atonement in the sense that it had any necessary connection with the forgiveness of sin. In other words, according to this school, the ethical and social ideals of Jesus are

the causes which must transform the world. Belief in God and immortality often accompanies this view, but not always, as will appear later.

In the opposing group a radically different view prevails. The evangelical holds that God entered the world in a new and unique way in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. He introduced new spiritual forces from without. Christianity is primarily redemptive. Men are saved by the direct operation of God's power. The hiding of the gospel's power is primarily not in moral or social reform, but in its regenerating power in the heart of the individual. Paul so declared. He was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Romans 1:16). Personal faith in Christ is the sluiceway through which the tide of divine power flows into the world. Regeneration of the individual heart is the cornerstone of Christianity. This divine power became a permanent historic force when Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians that they might know what was "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:19-20).

It requires very little reflection to see the differences between the moral and spiritual causes as conceived by these two groups. On the one

hand man is held to be in bondage to sin and in need of a divine redemptive power working within to emancipate him. On the other it is held that no such bondage exists. All man needs is education. With one group something new is needed by sinful men; with the other merely a recognition of one's likeness to God is sufficient. With one group a power from without, with the other an unfolding from within is required. With one group man accepts a saving grace to which by reason of sin he can make no just claim. With the other he merely claims what is already his own. With one group Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, and our Lord and Saviour. With the other he is the son of Joseph and Mary and an inspiring example of filial devotion to God. With one group conversion as the result of evangelistic preaching is one of the permanent aims of Christianity. With the other education and training, or ethical culture, are the only needs. With one group is a great missionary passion based on the conviction that the world needs a saving Christ. With the other altruism in the form of schools, hospitals and social reorganization is the chief need. With the evangelical group there is no denial of the ethical and social needs and results. Indeed they are held to be implicit in the whole Christian movement. The causes carry the effects in themselves at every stage. But the effects are impossible without the causes. The radical group insist much upon the ethical and social

effects, but sever them from the causes, as those are conceived by the evangelical group.

Several years ago an eastern publishing house requested the writer to take part in a symposium to be published in a book. It was to answer the question whether the abolition of all other creeds and the adoption by all Christian bodies of Lincoln's short creed, "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," would not unify the denominations and result in a mighty turning of men to religion and the church. I wrote a brief contribution to the symposium. It was a decided negative to the question. I did not and do not believe that the adoption of Lincoln's short creed would result in any notable turning of men to religion and the church. Among other reasons one was sufficient. There already exists in this country, and has existed for about a century, a religious denomination based upon the essential elements of Lincoln's short creed, viz., the Unitarian. That denomination has little power to propagate religion, and is the least successful of all in winning men to the religious life. It is about the smallest and weakest of the denominations in America today. Its success has been in meeting a cultural and intellectual rather than a religious need. The kind of mind to which it appeals is in no sense typical of men generally in their religious yearnings. It has not gripped the world at large because its appeal is limited to a narrow segment of the world's population. Its negations destroy

the spiritual causes and forces which make the Christian religion a world-conquering power.

These then are the fundamental issues: the issue as to the facts involved, the issue as to the rights, and the issue as to the causes. It is not proposed in the pages which follow to deal with these issues formally under separate headings. But it is proposed to show throughout the discussion that the modern attack upon the evangelical faith is based upon an unwarranted denial of the Christian facts, the Christian rights or the Christian causes. To make clear these fundamental issues at the outset will make it possible to present the Christian case in a manner clear and simple and at the same time comprehensive.

CHAPTER III

THE RIGHTS OF RELIGION

In the preceding chapter the statement was made that one fundamental issue concerned rights. Fundamentally the common right of science, philosophy and religion, is the freedom for each to pursue its own aim by its own method. Conflict arises only when this common right is ignored or forgotten. Each of these is sufficient unto itself within its own domain. Science does not ask the permission of religion to carry on its work. Philosophy, as a purely rational process, may be active without a religious life or experience. These rights of science and philosophy will scarcely be questioned by any informed person. It is only when we begin to affirm that religion has equal rights that men begin to demur. No affirmation is more needed to-day than that of the freedom and autonomy of religion. The Christian religion, especially, exists as a free autonomous form of human life and experience. It has credentials which are entirely adequate. It is doing a work in the world which is its ample justification. It brings to its genuine followers a spiritual life which fulfills the religious ideal. It is historically grounded in facts. It rests upon a psychology which is the only rational explanation of the

spiritual phenomena of two thousand years. It gives rise to a philosophy of the universe which best succeeds in explaining all the facts and forms of being and experience. Its ethical and social outcome meets every requirement of an advancing civilization.

And yet this inalienable right of freedom to pursue its own ends in its own way, and by its own methods, is being constantly denied to religion by the scientific, philosophic and religious radicals of our time. In the past when the ecclesiastical had behind it the political power, religionists exercised tyranny over scientists. This is no longer done. The tables are turned in a real sense. The rights of religion itself are called in question. Modern scientific and philosophic thought, in one of its current forms, is enlarging its sphere of influence and intensifying its intolerant mood, and assuming an intellectual arrogance which intimidates many. Some are already reduced to silence. Others are so fearful, that their witness to religious truth is confined to the neutral things. Attack is prevented by affirming nothing. We are in a period of "scientific absolutism," as the late Professor William James used to phrase it.

This "scientific absolutism" is the intellectual autocracy of the twentieth century. Like all other autocracies it comes by its authority in an illegitimate way. It has mounted the throne by trampling other rights under its feet. It is ruthless in its radicalism, and unlawful in its intellec-

tual processes and methods. Its influence has extended to many departments of research besides the physical. Psychology, criticism, philosophy, and comparative religion even have felt its spirit and borrowed its attitude. The Christian religion, because of its tremendous influence, its unparalleled achievements and its claim to a supernatural origin, is the chief offender. The consequence has been that Christianity has been dealt with by means of methods and criteria which are alien to religion. An effort has been persistent to remake the religion of the New Testament in the image of physical science, of biology, of psychology, of sociology, of historical criticism, of comparative religion, and of philosophy. It has not been approached from the standpoint of religion. Man's religious need and function have not been considered. The criteria and standards of truth and explanation which are proper in religion have not been used. The evidence as a whole has not been weighed. Some partial intellectual need has been the chief motive behind these efforts. Some alleged demand of the "modern mind" has controlled. As a matter of fact it has been a very superficial reading of the modern mind. In its fundamental needs the modern man is like the ancient man. Pascal made that clear years ago. And the modern world witnesses to it in millions of lives.

The result has been inevitable. Christianity has been made over again to meet some partial intel-

lectual need. But it has lost its power as religion. We have a reduced Christ and a reduced Christianity. But it has only one merit. It cannot be attacked on the intellectual grounds which govern in the circles of "scientific absolutism." As religion, however, it has little or no value. In the forcible process of making religion conform to a false standard, it has lost its value as religion. In doing this it is of course open to attack on intellectual grounds as well. Just as soon as functions are defined, criteria of judgment made clear, and correct methods found, the whole situation is changed. Science, psychology, criticism, sociology, philosophy, comparative religion, are all in harmony with Christianity. It is only sectarian science, or scientific absolutism, and the sisterhood of cultural pursuits which attends it, that can find points of conflict with the evangelical faith.

The whole radical movement has been a flagrant denial of the fundamental rights of religion. It has been a forcible imposition of alien standards. It is time for Christianity to make a new declaration of independence. It must again make clear that religion makes its own appeal, brings its own credentials, has its own criteria of truth which are perfectly valid and legitimate from every point of view. It has its own modes of verification, its own constructive principle, its own way of apprehending Reality. In a word, the Christian religion is elemental and fundamental in

human life. It is like any natural force in this respect. As the power of gravitation does not have to appeal to electricity, or vice versa, so Christianity does not need to ask the permission of physical science in any of its forms to carry on its work in the world.

I repeat here what was said in another connection. By the Christian religion, I mean that religion of which Jesus Christ is the center and of which the New Testament is the record. I do not mean any doctrinal system which has arisen since the New Testament was written. So far as this argument is concerned the Nicene and Chalcedonian decisions as to the Person of Christ and the Godhead, might be blotted out of existence. So also might other schemes of doctrine, the Calvinistic, Arminian and so on. The main question concerns the realities set forth in the record of the life and work of Jesus Christ. All the vital and essential elements of the doctrinal systems would come back if we should make a new start from the facts. And while I have the profoundest appreciation of the need and value of correct doctrines, nevertheless the argument of this book is concerned primarily with facts rather than formal systems of doctrine.

In later chapters it is proposed to show how violence has been done to the Christian religion; how its rights have been denied, alien principles and criteria of truth applied to it, and how by an intellectual *tour de force* it has been converted

into something entirely different. In the present chapter the aim is to define more clearly what is meant by the independence and autonomy of religion in general and of the Christian religion in particular. The following affirmations may be confidently made.

First, religion is an inalienable human function and right. Man believes in gods or a God. He has always done so, and we may believe always will do so. This is a fact not to be explained away; but to be accepted. Just as thinking and preparing and planning in some form or other are always present in men of all degrees of civilization, so also a feeling of dependence on a superior being or beings, is always present. Man is incurably religious. There is no need to-day to elaborate or attempt to prove this point.

Second, the central element in religion is some sort of adjustment between man and God. On the lower levels of religion men want God or the gods to help them in many private and selfish enterprises, with little regard for higher spiritual needs. In the Christian religion the primary interest is moral and spiritual. The desire is for moral and spiritual redemption. Men want forgiveness for their sins, assurance of God's love, fellowship with him, moral reënforcement to win the victory in life's battle for the individual and for society, the conquest of death and assurance of immortality.

Third, in the Christian religion God takes the

initiative in saving men. Jesus Christ is his revelation to the world. For man he becomes the way to God, the truth of God and the life in God. He is the Mediator between God and man. Through him God speaks and acts. "No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). He is made unto men wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (I Cor. 1:30). God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself (II Cor. 5:19). In him and his gospel life and immortality were brought to light (II Tim. 1:10).

Fourth, reality in religion is religiously known. The religious Object is God. In the Christian religion the religious object is God the Father. He becomes known to us through Jesus Christ. Jesus once thanked the Father that religious truth was hidden from those who had a conceit of wisdom, and was revealed unto babes. The docile and teachable could know his own relation to God: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall will to reveal him" (Matt. 11:25-27). And then he adds the great invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy

and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). Four things are clear from this invitation and the context in which it is found: 1. Christ himself is the object of faith. "Come unto me." 2. We are to bow to his authority in religion. "Take my yoke upon you." 3. He perfectly fulfills for us the religious ideal. "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." 4. Through him we come to a true knowledge of God.

Fifth, religious certainty is religiously conditioned. There are many forms of human certainty. In all spheres confidence is achieved, certainty is realized, and authority of utterance arises in accordance with the realm of endeavor and the nature of the task. The bridge-builder employs the laws of mechanics and mathematics and wins an authoritative position by building bridges that stand. His certainty is mechanically and mathematically conditioned. A musical critic achieves certainty by musical culture. Authority in musical criticism is musically conditioned. To teach literature successfully, a man must bathe his mind in the great masterpieces. His certainty in literature is conditioned by the sphere in which it moves. A sailor look-out on the bow of an ocean liner saw a distant sail several minutes before the bystanders saw it. And they saw it only with great difficulty after the sailor pointed straight towards it. Even then the sail appeared no bigger than a needle-point on the far horizon. The sailor's certainty arose out of his sea-trained

vision. He saw what was invisible to others because he had complied with the conditions of farsightedness at sea. So also is religious certainty conditioned in a religious way. The Christian act of faith is a self-committal to God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Instantly it brings the soul into contact with spiritual Reality. Call Buddha, and Buddha does not come. Call Mohammed, and Mohammed does not come. But call Jesus and he comes. The apostle Paul described his own spiritual life as containing two vital elements, renunciation and trust. "What things were gain to me I counted loss for Christ." Then he states his life purpose: "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death (Phil. 3:7-10).

The centrality of Jesus Christ for man's religious life is the most conspicuous truth in the New Testament. Of course he is the great teacher. Certainly he is the matchless example. He is the archetypal man, the prince of saints, the crown of humanity. But he is also the eternal Son of God and Saviour of the world. The synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of John and all the Epistles are literally drenched with this thought. Indeed modern scholarship of all schools admits this. Some attempt to show that it is based upon elements borrowed from the Gentile religions. But its presence in the very warp and woof of the New Testament no one seriously denies. I shall

later consider the alleged Gentile sources. Meantime the fact of the New Testament faith in Christ must be recognized.

There is another fact which requires no proof. It is that the same New Testament faith in Jesus Christ is the heart of evangelical Christianity to-day. This is a fact gloried in by the evangelicals and deprecated by the modern liberal and radical. This latter group, trained in scholastic circles where religion is treated as a subject of rational inquiry merely, do not at all understand the meaning or power of this faith in Christ. They have never even considered what Jesus Christ means to the human soul as a religious object. They are always occupied with Christianity as a problem for the reason. Of course there is no ultimate conflict. But no man is capable of weighing Christianity in the scales of reason until he knows what Christianity is.

The modern man whose attitude towards Christ is merely negative, remains outside of the Christian movement. He cannot achieve certainty on a Christian basis at all. He must first know Christ and the power of his resurrection. He must know Christ as an inner moral and social power before he can possibly understand the Christian movement as a whole.

The evangelical Christian faith is the hope of the world. It is the very center of the world's religious life. It is the gulf-stream in the ocean of men's beliefs. It is clearly defined. Its direc-

tion is known. Its influence in warming and fertilizing the countries it touches is unquestioned. Like the gulf-stream, this faith is elemental and fundamental. There is no more likelihood that it will be turned back in its course than that the gulf-stream will be turned back. So long as the preaching of it converts and regenerates men, reënforces them morally and spiritually, inspires them with new hope, fills them with a new spiritual satisfaction, brings them to a new self-realization, and gives to them a peace and certainty which frees them for service to God and man—is there any probability that the "modern man" is going to make any discovery in the physical or human world that will enable him to overthrow this faith?

Sixth, we are led by the preceding to the next principle: religious rationality is religiously achieved. Aristotle did a great service to mankind in discovering and stating the principles of deductive reasoning. It is only in recent years, however, that mankind has begun to learn that the syllogism in its narrower meaning is inadequate. Rationality has many dimensions. The world is rational, of course, in the ordinary sense. But it is also esthetically, emotionally, volitionally, morally and spiritually rational. It is esthetically rational because there must be something in the constitution of things which answers to man's sense of the beautiful. If the world is emotionally rational, there must be somewhere in the universe, or everywhere in it, an Object

which can completely and ideally love man and be loved by him. If the world is volitionally rational, there must be a supreme will which answers to our finite wills and which we may obey. If the world is morally rational, there must be a Being who answers the needs of our consciences. And if it is spiritually rational there must be an infinite Spirit with whom we may commune and have fellowship. One of the most discerning of modern thinkers concludes a chapter on "The Sentiment of Rationality" with the following:

"No philosophy will permanently be deemed rational by all men which (in addition to meeting logical demands) does not to some degree pretend to determine expectancy, and in a still greater degree make a direct appeal to all those powers of our nature which we hold in highest esteem. Faith, being one of these powers, will always remain a factor not to be banished from philosophic constructions, the more so since in many ways it brings forth its own verifications."[1] All the modern systems of idealistic philosophy beginning with Hegel, work with the principle of rationality in the narrower sense. The infinite reason is logically implicated in the finite reason. Man's thirst for infinite knowledge is the presupposition of the existence of the infinite Knower. There is every reason for extending this princi-

[1] William James in *The Will to Believe, and Other Essays*, p. 110.

ple and mode of inference to every part of man's higher nature, including the emotions, will and moral sense, as well as the logical faculty. In short, idealism inevitably tends to become personalism.

Religion is a personal relation of fellowship between God and man. Now to prove that the universe is religiously rational, one must travel the road of religious experience. Jesus said: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). It is clear from the preceding that disputants are working at cross-purposes when this truth as to religious rationality is not recognized on both sides. Use reason in the narrow Aristotelian sense and your conclusion about God and religion is insecure. It can be attacked on other logical grounds. But bring reason over into the larger context of the religious life itself and it attains stability.

Seventh, religious causality must be allowed its own place. There is more to be said about the principle of causation in later chapters. Here I wish to make sharp the difference between physical and free causation. The recognition of facts is all that is required. On the physical level the law of continuity, of conservation of energy prevails. You explain an event when you point out its antecedents in the physical chain. The row of bricks falls because each pushes over the next one. The vegetation becomes coal, the coal be-

comes heat, the heat becomes electricity, the electricity moves the dynamo, and a system of machinery begins to do its work. Science has wrought wonders with this principle. In fact it has so fascinated the modern world with it that other truths have often been forgotten. The law of physical continuity in the hands of some moderns has become so absolute that every spiritual value and reality has been swallowed up in it. Like the coiled serpent with glittering eye fixed upon the unwary winged creature in the air above, it has charmed the religious life and convictions into its fatal devouring mouth.

Men have often forgotten the law of free causation. The human will is an ultimate fact of the world, as given. Man thinks, feels, chooses and wills a given end. He acts in accordance with that choice and a new force is released in the world. This is a self-evident fact of our consciousness and experience. It is not a fact to be converted into something else by theoretic reasoning. It is a form of reality, as definite and permanent as a block of granite. The center of the religious life is the will of man in harmonious relations with the will of God. God's will works in man's nature. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). This is the language of the great Apostle. It is the experience of millions of believers during the last two thousand years. The interaction of human wills among men is known to us in our

daily intercourse. The interaction of God's will and that of man is known in religious experience. Free causation on the personal level is as valid a principle to operate with in our mental constructions as is the law of continuity on the material level. Both are facts to be accepted and reckoned with. Doubts urged against one are equally valid against the other.

I note, as an eighth principle, that religious life and experience must be religiously evaluated. All kinds of confusions and controversies have arisen in recent times by failure to keep this truth in mind. How shall a critic approach religion? With what principles of explanation, with what tests of truth, with what norms and criteria of thought shall the various religions of the world be judged? There can be but one answer to these questions. Religion must be judged as religion. A very little reflection shows that this is true. The physicist working with mechanical and mathematical laws, never even approaches the religious life. It is a foreign country to him so far as his physical experiments are concerned. The science of chemistry rises a little higher, and the biologist higher still in the range of his vision. But neither of them reaches the level of the religious life. The science of psychology may study man's religious consciousness. But such a study is not *per se* a religious act. The conclusion of the psychologist may be anti-religious. He may, and often does, find nothing except a stream of consciousness, from

which God is absent. As stated in a previous connection there is one great principle which is common to Christianity and all the sciences: loyalty to fact. But the more accurate and thorough and self-consistent is the physicist, chemist, biologist, or psychologist, the less justification he finds for bringing religion to the test of the non-religious sciences. A necessary part of his scientific vision is the clear line of demarkation between religion and other things. An integral part of his scientific passion is the desire to avoid affirmations in spheres which lie outside his own. All this will appear in clearer light when we come to consider the many modern attempts to force religion into an alien mould. It is enough to add here that we never can understand religion until we treat it as religion. We must conceive it, define it, analyze it, expound it and defend it, not as physics, chemistry, biology, psychology or anything else, but as religion.

At this point an inevitable objection is urged. The modern scientific man is very much of a monist. For many any kind of dualism or pluralism is taboo. Most of the modern world-views for several decades have been monistic, although now a new movement has begun. The monistic idea has been carried over into all departments. Religion has been leveled down to other things. Its values have been transformed into something else. And thus it is a serious offense to many to assert that free causation is as valid as physical.

Religion is not allowed to have anything distinctive, because it involves a dualistic principle of explanation.

The alarm, however, is needless. Religion simply recognizes facts, and particularly the fact of the human and divine wills. It tries to define the relation between God's will and that of men. Theology thus becomes the systematic and orderly exposition of those relations and facts. The Christian religion bases all on the revelation of God in Christ. History combines with experience to give certainty and definiteness. There is nothing alarming in the dualism which Christianity introduces. It simply affirms two forms of reality: continuity and freedom. Christianity emphasizes the higher principle of freedom and personality. There is nothing contradictory to any lower principle. Personality itself is a marvel if we think only of continuity in the physical sense. It is like a geyser shooting up from unknown depths and sustained by unknown forces. There is a dualism as between man and nature, but no contradiction.

We know different things in different ways. Sometimes we know the same thing in more than one way. We know what water is by drinking it. We know the H_2O formula by a scientific process. We know what sunlight is and what it can do, by its effect on our bodies and on growing plants. We know its constituent colors and forms of energy by spectrum analysis, and other methods of

scientific research. A fin and a wing present a fruitful example of unity and diversity, a dualism combined with a sort of monism. There is identity of relation: an organ is related to an organism. There is identity of function. Each is a means of locomotion. But there is a marked dualism of form and environment. The fin moves in the water, the wing in the air. So also with science and religion. They are distinct in the forms of reality with which they deal: matter and spirit. They are distinct in their aims—classified knowledge of nature, and redemption. They are distinct in the principles of causation which they wield: continuity and freedom. They are distinct in their methods of verification: objective experimentation and spiritual experience. But underneath all these diversities there is a common unifying bond: the desire for truth. For science truth is formulated knowledge of the world. For religion it is the clearly expressed meaning of the immediate experience of God. As there is no way to merge the differences in the unity, so there is no way to cancel the unity by the differences.

It ought to be obvious to every one that some experimental knowledge of the religious life is necessary to any valid criticism of religion. And yet we find some of the boldest of the apostles of reconstruction in religion ignoring so simple a fact. Professor Conklin in his book, "The Direction of Human Evolution," constantly passes

judgment upon Christian beliefs. He talks in some places as if he were an expert in religion as well as in his own sphere of biology.

He has no qualms in boldly prejudging non-expert opinion in his own department. To understand evolution a man must be a biologist. He writes: "In general the opponents of evolution have neither the technical ability, nor even the desire to weigh critically the evidences for the truth of evolution. Properly to appreciate these evidences requires some first-hand knowledge of morphology, physiology, embryology, ecology, paleontology, and genetics. In science it is necessary to see and handle actual materials and processes in order to appreciate their significance." [2]

Now I have no disposition to question this general truth stated by Professor Conklin. The expert knows more than the non-expert. His judgment may not be superior. But it is true that the knowledge which the expert supplies is necessary to a final judgment in any department of research. One would naturally look for judicial breadth and fairness in a writer who made the above statement. But when Professor Conklin comes to deal with the interpretation of religion, it never seems to occur to him that the same kind of expert knowledge is required. He deals with various phases of religion. He has much to say

[2] Preface to New Edition of *The Direction of Human Evolution*, p. vii.

about miracles and the supernatural. But he never even states the case for the New Testament miracles, so that the reader has the full problem before him. Going over Professor Conklin's pages one finds a more or less dogmatic decision of point after point in religion. But we find little or no citation of the conclusions of men who are as expert in religion as Professor Conklin is in biology. He measures Christianity by biology. His conclusions yield not the original historical faith, but a biological Christianity. Why not make a readaptation of Professor Conklin's language thus: "In general the opponents of Christianity have neither the technical ability nor even the desire to weigh critically the evidences for the truth of the faith of the New Testament. Properly to appreciate these evidences requires some first-hand knowledge of the literary sources, the original facts, the several branches of Biblical science involved, and especially the Christian experience itself. In religion it is necessary to come in contact with the spiritual realities and forces in order to appreciate their significance." Certainly the recognition of the expert is as necessary on one side as on the other. It has often been said that preachers and theologians have gone out of their way to lecture scientists and philosophers. It is no doubt a fact. But it is amazing with what vehemence the modern scientist can preach modesty to his theological opponent, and practice dogmatism and arrogance in the realm of theolog-

ical opinion. Nine tenths of present day conflicts, or alleged conflicts, between science and religion, probably result from failure to recognize the separateness of the two. Religion must be judged as religion, not as biology or sociology or anything else, if it is to be appreciated and understood. A man may have any amount of knowledge about chemical reactions, morphology, paleontology, and other sciences, and none at all about religion. It is well known that specialization tends to narrow the vision. Gains in one direction are offset by losses in another. The man who is said to have spent ten years in researches in the life of the hermit crab no doubt acquired surpassing knowledge in this field. But you would scarcely consult him if you needed reliable information about the solar system.

The greatest recent gain in thought about religion and science is the increasing recognition of the distinctiveness of their spheres. That recognition is inadequate, but there are signs of progress. I developed the point in a volume published several years ago.[3] One of the best recent volumes which make it clear is that of Professor Hudson, entitled *The Truths We Live By.* There are others which will be noticed later. I give here a few quotations from Professor Hudson. He refers to the two disastrous mental attitudes which result with many from a misunderstanding as to

[3] See *Freedom and Authority in Religion,* by E. Y. Mullins, Chapters III and IV.

science and its relation to moral and spiritual truths: "They either accept the agnosticism of science, or they take refuge in a faith that presumes to ignore science." He declares that what we call the "great verities," or spiritual truths, are of immense practical significance. But he thinks "a faith in them which takes no account of modern scientific thought will end in inevitable doubt; and while the agnosticism of science is sound so far as science goes, it is not final, since it happens that the logic of science is not the only logic there is. The difficulty is that most men of culture tend to think so. For the chief reason for the prevalent skepticism concerning life's fundamental problems is the wide-spread belief that the range of natural science and of human reason are synonomous; that not only what science demonstrates is true, but that what it does not or cannot demonstrate is either beyond decision or is thereby disproved."[4] Again he says: "Reason is larger than the reason of that special enterprise called science; it has other methods of proof precisely as cogent as are science's demonstrations. It is through such a reason that the writer undertakes to prove the truths we live by—the truths which many men have practically abandoned, not so much because they have thought as because they have not thought enough."[5] In another connection Professor Hudson points out

[4] *The Truths We Live By,* pp. vi-vii.
[5] *Ibid.,* pp. viii-ix.

that the best modern scientists are careful to avoid claiming other fields than their own: "There is not a single scientific specialist of repute who has attempted to prove by scientific method that what science cannot demonstrate is thereby disproved. Science itself has never taught us that all we know is science."[6]

Now all this is just another way of saying that there are other realities besides those in the physical or biological realm. There is more than one way of knowing objects. Spiritual realities are spiritually known. Reason has more than one dimension. Truth arises in more than one way. All this implies the inevitable downfall of any kind of intellectual autocracy that attempts to force one criterion of truth upon all the domains of life. Religion carries its own credentials. The Christian religion, as represented by the thinkers who recognize adequately this great truth, was never more sure of its own foundations than it is to-day.

In closing this chapter on The Rights of Religion, one other statement is in order. There is no thought of any effort to protect the Christian religion against any lawful means of testing its truth. Indeed it welcomes any kind of attack which is honestly made. There is no sound principle of science, philosophy or historical criticism which it fears. Christians are children of the day, not of the night. They believe that when men re-

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

ject their religion, it is not because they have thought the problem through, but because they have failed to do so. The plea therefore in this chapter for the rights of religion is that the true issue be held in mind. It is a false issue when men deal with religion as if it were physics or chemistry or biology, or psychology, or sociology. There is no necessary conflict between any of these and religion. But when men crave religion and a solution of its problems, then religious criteria must be employed. When modern science offers any other it gives a stone instead of bread, a serpent instead of a fish.

CHAPTER IV

REDUCING CHRISTIANITY: MODERN SCIENCE

It is proper to show next how the Christian religion has been reduced by false methods. There is no longer any dispute over the salient New Testament teachings. That Jesus was held to be the eternal Son of God by the writers of the Gospels and Epistles is now scarcely denied by any group. That his death was regarded as a real atonement for sin; that he wrought genuine miracles, that the grave was emptied of its contents by a resurrection of his body—these are undisputed parts of the New Testament records. Of course many refuse to accept them as true. They employ various means of setting the records aside. These are the current ways of reducing the Christ of the New Testament and the religion of the New Testament to much smaller dimensions. In succeeding chapters these ways will be examined. Chief among them are the philosophy of religion, psychology, historical criticism and comparative religion. But all these flow from one fountain head. And that is the conception of science in the narrower sense as applied especially to physics and biology. One principle rules throughout. In the present chapter attention is given to that principle. The principle itself is quite valid within

its own range and sphere. It has proven most fruitful when legitimately employed. Its downfall has come only when it becomes drunk with success and invades other spheres.

I am referring to the doctrine of continuity or physical causation. It is so familiar that it needs only brief definition. An event occurs in nature. Its only true explanation is to be found in its antecedents. In any given instance the antecedents and consequents are quantitatively equivalent. Thus the universe is a flowing stream of causes and effects. A given cause is transformed into a particular effect. This in turn is transformed into another, and so on through the whole course of nature. All things that exist are thus linked and locked together. The universe is a closed system. The total amount of energy does not vary. The form may change, but not the quantity. There may even be qualitative changes. Nature rises from the mechanical level to the chemical; from the chemical to the biological; from life to feeling and instinct; and from feeling and instinct to consciousness and a moral sense, and on up to the religious level. There may be what actually is, or appears to be, progress from lower to higher forms. But in all change and all progress one principle rules. New things arise out of new combinations of old things. The stream of energy is continuous. Never is it broken into. The one and only valid principle of explanation is the law of continuity.

There is nothing new in this statement of the doctrine of continuity. It has long been familiar. Its value when applied within its own proper limits is generally recognized. Science has wrought wonders with it. But one fact about it is by no means familiar to many. And that is the thorough-going manner in which it has been extended to all realms. Like a net it has been stretched across the stream of life and everything has been caught in its meshes. Ethics and religion, and all man's higher spiritual experiences have been brought under its sway. The uncritical acceptance of the assumptions of this way of thinking by many teachers, preachers and religious leaders is one of the marked features of present-day religious life. Recent controversies illustrate well the situation. These controversies have usually been three-cornered. One group goes all the way with the advocates of the continuity doctrine and openly rejects whatever elements in the New Testament seem to conflict with it. Another group who claim to hold the supernatural elements intact, especially the miracles and resurrection of Christ, have been laboring hard to "liberalize" their too conservative brethren who know little about science, but who know a great deal about religion and religious experience. Many lectures have been read to the "conservatives" admonishing them to put aside their fears of science and accept the inevitable. Unfortunately these lectures and preachments have too often been desti-

tute of any indication as to how all the recent claims of science in the sphere of religion can be accepted without losing religion itself. The third group includes the conservatives themselves who agree on the great underlying facts and truths of Christianity, but who vary considerably on minor details.

Latterly the controversy has degenerated into an attack from one side on one or two positions of one group of conservatives, such as premillennialism, which lend themselves easily to caricature and ridicule. From the other side the attack has taken the form of attempts to secure legislative action to prevent the teaching of evolution in the public schools. Nothing could be more ill-advised than for Americans to attempt to employ legislative coercion in the realm of scientific opinion.

As I see it the merits of the evolution controversy have been greatly obscured by confusion as to the meaning of terms, and particularly by the use of the word evolution in two distinct senses. By two distinct senses I do not mean theistic and atheistic evolution. I mean evolution interpreted in strict accordance with the doctrine of continuity, whether theistic or atheistic, and evolution interpreted in accordance with the supernatural facts of New Testament history. The theistic evolutionist as a rule finds justification for belief in God and immortality and the moral ideal. A great many of them find little to contend for in

the New Testament records as to the deity of Christ, his atonement and miracles and his resurrection from the dead. Opposed to him is the thinker who accepts these Christian facts. He is perfectly willing to admit that God made the world gradually through long eras of time, that there is progress and growth in the universe, that the world is dynamic with a great divine purpose which is moving towards a shining goal. Moreover he refuses to dogmatize in the scientific realm. He holds himself open to the acceptance of any established fact of science. He insists at the same time that science should practice the same modesty that it enjoins upon others. Let it assert only when the evidence warrants it. This type of thinker often calls himself a Christian evolutionist. The question is whether he is, in the strict sense of the word, entitled to do so.

Professor Henry Churchill King, in a book entitled *Reconstruction in Theology,* published several years ago, affords an example of the Christian evolutionist. He has several things to say on the subject of miracles. The question of miracles is a question of fact. "Philosophical speculation masquerading as science cannot be allowed *a priori* to block the way to a really inductive scientific investigation of the facts."[1] Again he says: "The attempts deliberately to eliminate the miraculous from the Gospel records have scarcely

[1] P. 62.

followed the scientific procedure."[2] And again on the next page he quotes Sanday's article in Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible, as follows: "The truth is that the historian who tries to construct a reasoned picture of the Life of Christ finds that he cannot dispense with the miracles. He is confronted with the fact that no sooner had the life of Jesus ended in apparent failure and shame than the great body of Christians—not an individual here and there, but the great mass of the church—passed over at once to the fixed belief that he was God."[3]

Miracles in the New Testament are not "isolated wonders." They are a necessary part of a great moral and spiritual movement and they serve the highest divine ends. Men are persons. God sustains personal relations with men. God's relation to nature does not and cannot exclude these personal relations. God's purpose of love rules everywhere. This is the ideal interpretation. "In ultimate thinking both the theologian and the scientist, as men, cannot refuse to face the question of the possible unity of the causal connections and the ideal interpretation, and this is at bottom the question of miracles."[4] Any finally rational view of the world requires the dominance of the spiritual order. "To such a spiritual order too, especially the facts of the Old Testament and

[2] P. 63.
[3] P. 66.
[4] P. 76.

the New Testament revelation—above all Christ—distinctly point."[5]

This clear recognition of the miraculous element in the New Testament prepares for Dr. King's statement of his doctrine of evolution, which he holds, not merely as theistic but as Christian.[6] Theistic evolution with the Christian element left out is wholly inadequate.

Professor King declares his acceptance of the evolution doctrine. But he expounds it in a way which differs from the current method in biology. Very briefly summarized it is as follows. When anything new appears in the world it is really new. There is progress from lower to higher. But "we cannot assume even that the succeeding stage is present in the sense that all its *conditions* are fully present *before* the new stage appears. We are not to fool ourselves, in learned delusion, with the convenient conception of potentiality, and say that the next stage is potentially present; if *all* the conditions of a thing are fully present, the thing must appear coincidentally. It is not possible to conceive, when we think clearly, that all the conditions of a phenomenon are fully present, and yet that the phenomenon tarries. Something really new then appears in the course of evolution."[7] The new element is explained by reckoning with the environment as well as with the

[5] P. 78.
[6] P. 72.
[7] P. 84.

evolving organism. Ultimately God is the environment of all things, nature and man. God as immanent in nature is recognized, but also God as transcendant. Man as a person communes with Another, who is God. Such communion and prayer would be impossible if God were only immanent in nature and man. The divine immanence alone is little if any better, as an explanation of God's relation to the world, than the deism which was discarded a long time ago.[8]

Thus Professor King's Christian doctrine of evolution provides for the miracles and whatever of the supernatural the facts of the case require. This is in strict harmony with the scientific spirit. He refuses to rule out revelation and miracles and the supernatural origin of Christianity out of deference to a principle abstracted from a level of nature below the personal. There is more than the continuity principle in the universe. There is a divine will and purpose unifying all.

It was inevitable, however, that Professor King should feel the inconsistency of his conception of evolution with the prevailing view. He therefore cites the view of Pfleiderer in opposition to his own in order to answer it. Says Pfleiderer: "The fundamental error of the theologians of the new faith of the present day consists in this, that they think that one can without hesitation acknowledge the validity of the same scientific method in the domain of nature which they refuse to apply

[8] See Chapter VII in *Reconstruction in Theology.*

to that of history. . . . There is only the one choice: Either the evolutionary mode of thought is right, in which case it must be uniform in all fields of investigation, in history, then, as well as in nature; or it is wrong, in which case the views of nature acquired by means of it are not justified, and we have no right to prefer them to the traditions of faith." Again Pfleiderer says: "What consequences now will follow the application of the doctrine of evolution to the theological consideration of history? First of all it is evident that it excludes miracles in every sense of the word—not merely the nature miracle (this the men of the new faith drop without pain) but also just as much the spirit miracle, that is the intervention of a foreign power in the human soul, whereby conditions are produced in it which do not result from the causal connection with antecedent conditions." [9]

It is no part of my present purpose to trace Dr. King's reply to Pfleiderer. I have cited the two views to illustrate the present situation. The word evolution is employed in two senses which are inconsistent with each other. Just as soon as the Christian elements are provided for in a statement of the evolution theory it collides with the orthodox scientific view. And it is at this point that so much confusion and obscurity arise in current debate. Men forget these contradictory ways of

[9] Quoted from Pfleiderer's *Evolution and Theology and Other Essays,* by King, pp. 97-98.

thinking about evolution, and reason as if they were one and the same. And this opens the door to all kinds of verbal sleight of hand. It is easy for a controversialist to attack his opponent with one meaning and defend himself against attack with another. For example a man tries to "liberalize" his too conservative brother into a more scientific attitude by affirming the general acceptance of evolution. The reply is made that evolution as held generally in biological circles is in direct collision with basic Christian truths and facts. Then the defense is made by citing the particular variety of evolution which bears the Christian stamp. Thus the word is used with two distinct meanings. The same controversialist wants to show sympathy for science and acknowledges to the biologist that he also believes in evolution. There is not as a rule any further question asked. The biologist knows what is the current accepted idea of evolution. He puts that meaning into the word and goes on his way with the comfortable assurance that his view is winning the victory.

The outcome of this sort of thing is endless confusion. Nobody understands anybody else. Other words acquire also a double meaning, among them religion and faith. The biological evolutionist asserts that his doctrine harmonizes with religion. He means by religion belief in the idea of God. The Christian means by religion faith in Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God and Redeemer

of man. This goes on in the use of all the words employed. Several systems of verbal weights and measures are in vogue at the same time. The coins are not accurately purified, weighed and stamped. The metal is left mixed with dross. Nuggets and bags of dust of varied and indefinite value are in circulation as in the early mining camps. This vagueness in the use of terms is fostered by the apostles of liberalism. Anything can hide and breed under cover of vagueness.

The demand for vagueness, the repudiation of doctrine, or exact statement in religion, is a curious phenomenon in current thought. Men were never so insistent on definiteness of value given for value received in commerce and trade. Carelessness as to dimes and nickles ever is regarded as a trait fatal to business success. In science men were never so insistent upon exactness of knowledge and statements of truth. Carelessness and inaccuracy are condemned as totally inconsistent with the scientific spirit and method. In mechanics accuracy to the thousandth of an inch is necessary if serious consequences are to be avoided. There is a passion for definiteness, accuracy and painstaking fidelity. And yet in religion many insist on the use of terms so vague and indeterminate that they become the refuge of all sorts of contradictory views.

Now this tendency is fatal to truth and progress. It is most of all fatal to religion. We are bound to use words with some sort of accuracy and

definiteness if religion is to have any power. Some one said not long ago that if he were a devil seeking for the best way to bring chaos and ruin to a country, he would without hesitation attempt to bring about a depreciation of its national currency. Germany and other European countries to-day are striking examples of such chaos. So also in religion, a depreciation of the currency, a reduction of the meaning of great words and ideas, is one of the quickest and shortest roads to ruin. If all who use the word evolution were as careful as Dr. King to make clear what the term signifies, the dangers would be greatly decreased. Scientific biologists would probably question his right to employ the word at all with the meaning given. For as Pfleiderer's statement clearly shows it is in direct conflict with the current orthodox conception of evolution. But my present plea is for clearness and definiteness in the meaning of terms.

One fact stands out with the utmost distinctness to-day. Science is engaged in an effort to remake religion. It is, however, not so much science itself as the theologians of science who have put their hands to this plow. The consistent scientist sticks to his own task. He leaves religion and theology in their intellectual expression to those trained to discuss them. But there has suddenly sprung into activity a group of theologians of science. They are boldly invading the field of

theology. They claim that the facts of science warrant religious beliefs. They themselves are called to express those beliefs and thus satisfy their longings. They no longer vainly hope as Omar expressed it:

"O love, could you and I with him conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits and then
Remold it nearer to the heart's desire."

They believe they can remold Christianity. The magic tool for so great an undertaking is science itself. Professor W. H. Wood, of Dartmouth College, in his book *The Religion of Science* has stated the case with great force and clearness. The scientist-theologian says:

"The sacred book is nature. It is independent, self-existent, self-moving, creative. There is one test of inspiration and truth. That is being true to nature.

"Matter is eternally conserved. So is energy. Energy is fixed in amount.

"Nature is a great mechanism. Its parts are connected.

"Nature is uniform, rational, objectively real." [10]

The scientist-theologian goes on to say:

"I believe in Evolution.

[10] Pp. 25-29.

"I believe in scientific method.

"A radical religion is the highest type.

"Religion is the product of evolution. It arose in and developed with the emotions. Religion probably emerged out of fear.

"God is a symbol of that which faith finds beyond where science ends. Science itself finds no God. It affirms no creative act. The chain of cause and effect extending back *ad infinitum* excludes the idea of the creation of the world and man." [11]

The supernatural is excluded.

The soul is not an independent entity which survives death and is immortal.

Man is a higher animal of the order of primates, closely related to the Chimpanzee, but with a higher degree of mentality.

Nature only is immortal in its material elements.

Human progress is to be realized by improving heredity and by education in social ideals.

The doctrine of individual salvation leads astray. Race preservation is the ideal.[12]

A scientist may be religious. But his religion will be not emotional but rational.

Evolution conceives God as immanent in nature.

Nature is everything that is.

Miracles, the inspiration of the Bible and related teachings are false.

True religion deals with this world not the next.

[11] Pp. 30-31. [12] Pp. 32-33.

Greater justice, peace and altruism on earth are the true goal.[13]

The above is a bare outline of Professor Wood's summing up of the proposed new religion of science. It will be observed that as a doctrinal system it is about as complete as any of the older systems. Its main features are fixed in the circle of scientific theologians. It is their new orthodoxy. Students of tendencies have known that this new orthodoxy was taking shape a long time ago. Only recently it has rounded out into complete form. We have a new group of teachers sitting in theological high places feeding mankind on a complete new system of doctrines out of the silver spoon of biological science.

The writer of these pages believes this effort of the theologians of science is predestined to fail. The chief reason is that the theological output is too diluted to serve the uses and ends of religion. A false principle has led to a wrong trail. The theological apples in the scientific platter of silver will prove to be gilded and painted instead of genuine. No religion or theology can long hold sway unless it is big enough and human enough to grasp life as a whole; or to state the same truth in another way unless it is religious enough to serve the ends of religion. This will be made doubly clear in a later analysis of the new religion of science. The immediate present task is to give one or two illustrations of the method of

[13] Pp. 34-36.

reducing Christianity in particular, and religion in general, to the narrow limits of the new orthodoxy.

Current theological literature abounds in examples of the process. Some of the writers are very earnest men with very high ideals. I do not criticize them in their own specialty. I am concerned only with their ideas of religion. It is in this realm that they come short.

A very interesting article appears in *The Hibbert Journal* for April 1923, by Julian Huxley, Fellow and Lecturer of Zoölogy, New College, Oxford. The title is *Progress: Biological and Other.* He asks what is the most fundamental need of man, as man, with his power of thought, reflection and self-consciousness. He answers, reflecting what most men would say: that the deepest need is "to discover something, some being or power, some force or tendency, which was molding the destinies of the world—something not himself, greater than himself, with which he yet felt that he could harmonize his nature, in which he could repose his doubts, through faith in which he could achieve confidence and hope."

The need, thus stated in impersonal terms, is clearly the religious need stated from a particular and not a general point of view. That such is the case appears a few paragraphs later. "There remains to search in the external world to find if possible a foundation of fact for the belief drawn from the inner world of mind, to test the concep-

tions of a supreme being or supereminent power against ever more and more touchstones of reality, until the most skeptical shall acknowledge that the final construction represents, with whatever degree of incompleteness, yet not a mere fragment reduced to fill a void, however inevitable, to satisfy a longing, however natural, but the summary, the essence of a body of verifiable fact, having an existence independent of the wishes or ideals of mankind."

From the point of view of the author this is a finely expressed and comprehensive statement of the aim in view. The objection to it is that for religious purposes it is inadequate. To search in "the external world," for a foundation of fact for the "belief drawn from the inner world of mind," is just the ancient process of theologians to find a new proof of the existence of God. The "modern mind" has long ago pronounced such "proofs" unconvincing. And it must be said that the outcome is merely a philosophy of the universe, not a religion. The further result that "the most skeptical shall acknowledge" the truth of the outcome, is to convert religious certainty into a form of logic which deals not with religious forces, but with external facts of nature. Even intellectual stability is not attained in that way. The proof is conclusive, of course. But the "most skeptical" are very stubborn. And unless man's religious longings and struggles can be made to turn on some other axis they will never find their

true orbit. In the realm of a logic which builds its structures out of the facts of external nature the logicians never have agreed upon a satisfying object for religious worship.

Professor Huxley then gives a beautiful and convincing biological argument to prove that there is progress in nature. It is not necessary to repeat his reasoning here. In the end he finds evidence that there is a response in nature to man's greatest need. In Matthew Arnold's phrase there is in nature the manifestation of something not ourselves that makes for righteousness.

The hardest problem of all, says Professor Huxley, is this: when in our supreme moments we seem "to touch the Absolute and Infinite—what of their relation to progress?" He adds: "Doubtless, when we say that at such moment we touch the Infinite or the Absolute, we mean only that we touch what is infinite and absolute in comparison with our ordinary selves. None the less, the sense of finality and utter reality attendant on them is difficult to bring into line with our idea of progress." In this way the usual circle is complete. If progress in the biological sense is an absolute principle with no exceptions, how can God be exempt? If change is the final fundamental fact where is there an unchangeable Object for religious belief. The biologist gives with one hand and takes away with the other. Once more I ask: has religion no rights of its own? Is it to be brought into the court of biology and tried there before

it can hold up its head? Nay, verily. The Christian religion welcomes every proof supplied by biology and the other sciences, but it does not obtain its credentials from them. They may confirm faith. They cannot create it. Their function is well recognized and clearly defined. So also, men should recognize the function of religion. To substitute one for the other, to confuse the functions, to define one by means of the other is to attempt the impossible. It cannot be done any more than an eagle could propel itself under water with its wings, or a trout propel itself through the air with its fins.

A more extended effort to remake Christianity by means of biology is that of Professor E. G. Conklin in his volume, *The Direction of Human Evolution.* I am not here concerned with his polemic against men who have tried to get bills through legislatures on the teaching of Darwinism. One conviction he states in his preface: "The worst form of infidelity is not disbelief in doctrines, whether theological or scientific, but disbelief in the ultimate triumph of truth. If evolution is false, it cannot be saved by science; if it is true, it cannot be destroyed by theology."[14] An exactly similar statement can be made about Christianity. If Christianity is false it cannot be saved by theology, if it is true it cannot be destroyed by science. I do not assert that Professor Conklin tries to destroy Christianity. But I do

[14] P. vii.

say that when he winds up his argument nearly all the distinctive features of historic Christianity have disappeared. The reader will understand that I am not here calling in question Professor Conklin's competency as a biologist. I am dealing with his religious views derived from biology. He has certainly not succeeded in painting the face of Christianity with recognizable features on a canvas and by means of a brush and colors supplied by biological science.

I give a summary of his general position as it relates to religion. Most fundamental, of course, are the assumptions. He begins by asserting the competency of the biologist in the realm of religion: "I realize that I am dealing with subjects which are generally regarded as quite outside the field of biology. However, I am convinced that nothing which concerns man is wholly foreign to the fundamental principles of life and evolution, and that the future progress of mankind depends upon a rational application of the principles of science to all human affairs."[15] As religion is a human affair, of course Professor Conklin has no compunctions in attempting to remake it on a model fashioned in his biological workshop.

The laws of nature are eternal. "The eternal laws of nature will not cease to operate to-day or to-morrow."[16] Again: "We catch but glimpses

[15] P. xv. Preface to first edition.
[16] P. 5.

of great processes which come out of eternity and go into eternity."[17]

The law of continuity controls the process. He quotes Buffon to the effect that in order to understand what has happened and what will happen we need only to examine what is happening. "This is what has been called the '*Law of Continuity*'—or more accurately the doctrine of uniformity, namely, the belief that nature is uniform and her processes continuous, that the laws of cause and effect, of gravity, of conservation of matter and energy, of thermodynamics, chemical affinity, life and death, heredity, development and evolution are the same yesterday, to-day and forever."[18]

The process of nature is new combinations of preëxisting elements, not the formation *de novo* of such elements. "Nowhere in nature, neither in the living nor in the lifeless world, is there such a thing as creation out of nothing. Every new thing is formed by new combinations of things already present."[19] The quantity of energy in the universe is fixed. All variableness in events, all changes are the results of new combinations of existing factors or causes."[20]

Man is no exception to other things in nature: "The elements out of which the psychic faculties of man have been developed are present in all organisms."[21]

[17] P. 5.
[18] Pp. 7-8.
[19] P. 9.
[20] P. 8.
[21] P. 23.

The royal road to truth is scientific method. "There is no royal road to truth, and no possibility of making real progress in human knowledge except by the slow and laborious methods of science." [22]

The above are the working principles or assumptions of modern biological science. Glance at a few of Professor Conklin's positions which bear more directly upon religion. On the nature of religion he writes: "The appeal of science is chiefly to reason, of government to action, of religion to emotion." [23] He quotes various writers to show how emotion controls. "The world is governed not by thought but by emotion." "What is *fundamental* in character is the instincts, impulses, desires, feelings, all these and nothing else." [24]

What is the function of religion? Professor Conklin replies: "All men everywhere have desired to be in harmony with the superhuman powers and processes which surround them; they have tried to avoid pain and evil and find happiness; they have sought inner peace amid conflict. Intelligent men have sought a rational explanation of mysteries. They have sought to adjust or adapt themselves to their environment whether it be the personal environment, inner or outer, or the cosmos." [25] Again he says: "Religion combines the worship of the true, the beautiful and

[22] P. 193.
[23] P. 161.
[24] P. 161.
[25] Pp. 166-7.

the good. The person who loves these is religious, it matters not what his professed creed may be." [26]

On the subject of the conflict between religion and science, Professor Conklin writes: "Between religion and science there can be no other conflict than such as may arise beween emotion and reason, between faith and knowledge. The conflicts have been rather between theology and the sciences. We are here concerned," he says, "primarily with the conflicts between natural science and especially biological science, and Christian theology." [27]

Religion, like everything else, evolves. "The faith of childhood or the childhood age of the race will not satisfy more mature stages of development." [28] Religious thinking is almost entirely in symbols. "God, the spirit of truth and beauty and goodness, becomes the 'Good Man,' the general spirit of evil becomes the 'Bad Man,' heaven becomes the celestial city with streets of gold, etc." "To insist that these symbols shall be accepted by mature minds as real material entities rather than as symbols, is like requiring grown up people to believe in Santa Claus as a real physical personality rather than as a symbol of the spirit of Christmas—the spirit of goodwill and service and love." [29] If Professor Conklin has found anywhere in Christian theology the conception of God as a "material entity" he does

[26] Pp. 167-8.
[27] P. 178.
[28] P. 179.
[29] P. 180.

not say where. In Christian theology, which he says conflicts with biological science, God is not regarded as a "material entity" nor as a "physical personality." God is Spirit, and they that worship him are required to worship in spirit and in truth.

Professor Conklin is an eloquent preacher of modesty and humility to his opponents. In the great universities, he insists, the church has lost control. The remedy is to be found "not in increased zeal but in increased wisdom." "Why should the church claim for itself authority in the matters of science?" [30] Let science correct science. It seems a little strange that this very sound piece of advice should not have been followed by the corresponding admonition to science. Suppose Professor Conklin had added the words: "Why should science claim for itself authority in matters of religion?" But this never seems to have occurred to him. It is true he says: "Strictly speaking, science and religion deal with different subjects. The purpose of science is knowledge, of religion faith and conduct." "The organ of science primarily is intellect, of religion the emotions and will; the goal of science is mechanism, of religion spirit." [31]

According to Professor Conklin there is no such thing as the supernatural in the usual sense of that word. He quotes Brooks approvingly: "The idea of the supernatural is due to a misunderstanding;

[30] P. 182. [31] Pp. 183-4.

nature is everything that is." [32] This is ambiguous. Schleiermacher used to say that viewed from above everything is natural, viewed from below some things are supernatural. But if "nature is everything that is" there can be no "above" and "below" in the sense of a Spirit who transcends physical nature. If there is a God at all, then according to Conklin's statement he is to be found in nature. Nothing else exists. In fact this definition settles all religious questions in advance. "Little by little all sorts of mysterious phenomena which were once considered supernatural, have been shown to be natural, and everywhere supernaturalism has been losing ground and naturalism has been gaining." [33]

The examples of the supernatural dealt with are the phenomena of alleged angelic appearances during the World War, modern spiritualism and related things. He nowhere gives any adequate attention to the recorded miracles of the New Testament. "The real issue," he declares, "between those who believe in supernaturalism and those who do not, is whether anywhere there are satisfactory evidences that such spiritual phenomena are uncaused, undetermined, unlawful. I know of no such evidence." [34] Professor Conklin could easily find convincing evidence of the supernatural in the New Testament. In any good theological library he could find a great mass of discussion of miracles by men of the highest

[32] P. 185. [33] P. 191. [34] P. 193.

scholarship. He would find that no one claims that they are "uncaused, undetermined, unlawful." Personality is a cause. God as a Person with a purpose determines things. His causation can scarcely be unlawful, since the laws are expressions of his will. Professor Conklin's world-view is based on the facts of biological science. The Christian world-view is based on the facts of history and experience. His view ties the universe down with the short tether of physical causation. The Christian view sets it at liberty with the doctrine of free causation. The protest which the Christian has a right to make against Professor Conklin's view of the supernatural is that he never really states the Christian view. His reader, if uninstructed otherwise, would never understand the issue.

As to creation, Professor Conklin says: "It is true that science never penetrates as far as the ultimate origin and cause of anything." Again: "Science maintains that so far as experience goes, every event is due to pre-existing natural causes, and it assumes that this chain of cause and effect stretches back *ad infinitum*, though of course this cannot be proven. This chain may end in a first cause or uncaused cause." "So far as we know or can conclude from present evidence, mechanism, law and order are universal and have been so from all eternity." [85]

Professor Conklin asks: "Is evolution athe-

[85] Pp. 203-204.

istic?" He replies in the negative. "Science deals only with secondary causes; it never touches the first cause." "Where science ends faith begins, and like the child or savage, the philosopher or scientist may still say 'in the beginning—God.'" [36] He mentions the issue as to a finite created universe and an eternal one. Along with these he mentions the corresponding conceptions of God as apart from the world and immanent in it. He concludes for the doctrine of immanence: "More and more all kinds of phenomena are being reduced to law." "If God is in all law, then is he in the world as much, yes more than ever; and every blazing autumn hedge is really the burning bush out of whose midst the Omnipotent speaks." [37]

On the subject of the doctrine of design one quotation will give Professor Conklin's view: "In the light of Darwin's theory we see that adaptations are the result of natural causes; the causal mechanism applies to all the fitnesses of nature as well as to other phenomena; but back of all mechanism, or running through all mechanism, is teleology or purpose." [38]

And now finally I cite Professor Conklin's conclusions. The final chapter is on "The Religion of Evolution." He began by claiming the scientific prerogative of refashioning religion on biological principles. Here he outlines the result of his efforts. He discusses it under three heads.

[36] P. 211. [37] P. 213. [38] P. 223.

First, "the religion of evolution is a religion of progress through struggle and effort. It is neither pessimism nor optimism, but realism." Disease and suffering challenge man. "Tuberculosis, plague, cholera, typhoid, yellow fever, malaria, syphilis, cancer and other diseases are to be conquered." "We must seek through eugenics and euthenics to improve the bodies of men, through education, the minds of men; through religion, the morals of men." [39]

Second, the religion of evolution is *ethnocentric* rather than *egocentric.* Human society, not the individual, is the supreme value. "Evolution has taught us the superlative importance of the race or species. The welfare and evolution of the species is the supreme concern." [40]

Professor Conklin asks: "Can Christianity become the religion of reason and science as well as of emotion and faith, and be made the power for individual and social progress which its founder intended?" He thinks Christians have been very slow to learn. But there is hope. A "revolution in religion is going on." [41]

The third point deals with the outcome. There is plan or purpose revealed in the course of evolution. Man is the climax. No higher animal will be evolved. The religion of evolution deals with this world rather than the next. It prays, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth." It seeks to build here and now "the City of God."

[39] Pp. 237-239. [40] P. 241. [41] P. 244.

"It looks forward to unnumbered ages of human progress upon the earth, to ages of better social organization, of increasing specialization and cooperation among individuals and races and nations, to ages of greater justice and peace and altruism."[42] This, according to Professor Conklin is the religion of Confucius and Plato and Moses and Christ.

Professor Conklin joins the chorus of modern makers of religion in claiming Jesus Christ as the source of his religious ideas. In the next chapter I shall develop at length the objections to biological Christianity. Here I point out a few respects in which Professor Conklin's system differs from the religion of the New Testament. The truth is that we have here two circles of ideas. They intersect with small segments of their area. Christianity is a religion of altruism. So also is that of Professor Conklin. "The religion of service and sacrifice for the good of others" is the descriptive phrase of the religion of evolution according to Professor Conklin. To this extent it coincides with Christianity. But in other respects it is almost totally different. Observe some of the contrasts.

First of all, it never gives any clear view of God. A first cause is conceivable. A final cause or end is conceivable. But as both these lie beyond the range of demonstration, they remain unsupported by proof. The only proof possible for

[42] P. 240.

anything is to trace consequents back to antecedents. Scientific method must be employed in order to obtain any proofs. Now Jesus taught the reality of God, the Father. He defines God's relation to men and the world in terms of the greatest clearness.

Again Professor Conklin's system contrasts with that of Christ and the New Testament in the idea of worship. Nowhere is there any definition of worship which places the act inside the Christian circle. "Religion combines the worship of the true, the beautiful and the good."[43] The irreligious man is the man who does not worship these. Thus the religion of evolution puts ideals in the place of God as the object of worship. This is quite the logical outcome of the assumptions of Professor Conklin's biology. The immanent God is the only God he deals with in any practical way. In such a God there can be nothing higher at any time than what is given in our consciousness. There is no Other, or Being to whom we can speak, and who can answer. We ourselves are that Being at a particular stage of evolution. Our own mental constructions, or ideals of the true, the beautiful and the good, exhaust him. The contrast with Jesus at this point is most marked. For him God was the greatest of all realities, having an existence independent of man, a personality apart from man, and yet ever welcoming man's approach.

[43] P. 168.

Professor Conklin scarcely recognizes the reality or value of prayer. Here again the logic follows the main assumptions. If God is confined to the natural order, why ask him for things we need? If he never interposes his will in human affairs, why act a lie by bowing to him for help? If he has made everything depend upon our own struggle, why pass any responsibility back to him? Now there is nothing clearer in the teachings of Jesus than the reality and efficacy of prayer. Ask and ye shall receive. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. These are his reassuring words. So also in many sayings and parables the same truth is taught. What views could be wider apart than that of biological theory as interpreted by Professor Conklin, and that of Jesus? With one the universe is a closed system of natural law. With the other it is an open system of paternal and filial freedom. With one, personality must take its chances in a ruthless play of mechanical forces. With the other, personality is the supreme value of a loving God. With one the world is so made that a relation between Father and son can never control or interfere with the mechanics of physical forces. With the other the relation between Father and son is the key of all creation. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth with pain, because, according to Paul, the whole creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God (Romans 8:19). With biological theory the supreme law of continuity is that

found in new combinations of elements on the level of the physical. With Jesus the supreme continuity of the universe is the will of a Father, almighty maker of heaven and earth, who loves men and stoops to save them.

Of course the idea of divine Providence shares the same fate as other elements of Christianity. Men struggle and toil with disease and sufferings and evils of many kinds, but the outcome is dependent on themselves. Human prudence and foresight and growing knowledge and technical skill will lead to many victories. But the idea of a God who has an independent existence, who cares for us individually, who numbers the hairs of our head, who marks the fall of the sparrow, who actively causes all things to work together for our good—this is a conception wholly foreign to the religion of evolution. And yet this is the conception of God which saturates every page of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament.

The future life of immortality beyond death has no recognition in Professor Conklin's system. The only future he foresees is a better society on earth. The key words of human destiny are eugenics, euthenics, heredity, sanitation, social improvement. His logic again is faultless, basing his conclusions on just inference from his premises. He begins by adopting a theory of proof and of knowledge which precludes belief in immortality. Man's entire psychic life is the result of new combinations of lower forms of psychic life. Scien-

tific method cannot deal with a future immortal life. Therefore, we find no warrant for belief in it. Here again the contrast with the teaching of Jesus is too obvious to call for proof. The reader need only refer to the sayings of Jesus.

Professor Conklin nowhere recognizes the New Testament ideas of sin and salvation. These are fundamental in the teaching of Jesus, and in all the epistles. Apart from them it is impossible to understand the religion of Jesus Christ.

In reading Professor Conklin's pages one constantly expects to see a view of God come forth which leaves him some distinctiveness and personality. But always the dim outlines of the picture fade away. God remains identified with the natural order. So also one seems to see the soul with its religious aspirations and passionate longings climbing up to the rim of the weltering sea of naturalism. It seems about to find God and freedom and immortality. But always it is pushed back into the engulfing waves. And there it is left. The difference between the religion of evolution, as thus expounded, and the religion of Jesus, is the difference between despair and hope.

The process by which Professor Conklin achieves his result is perfectly obvious to the careful student of his pages. He has glorified a natural process into a religion. He has identified God with nature. He has made biological science the autocrat of the religious realm. He has never considered what are man's religious needs, or his

religious rights. He has not gathered the data which are necessary if we are to understand religion. He has not criticized religion from the religious, but from the biological standpoint. He has not applied religious but biological criteria to religion. He has not remembered that there is more than one way of discovering truth, and that rationality has more than one dimension. The next chapter will be devoted to a more extended criticism of the religion of biology.

CHAPTER V

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE

The supreme critic of the religion of biological science is religion itself. Religious experience knows more than biological science has discovered. It knows that a universe flattened down to the level of the law of continuity does not represent all the reality that is. It knows that any system which flattens out the personality of God and man to that biological level is contrary to the best attested items of our spiritual experience.

Religion is fellowship with a personal God. Every element in religion from simple faith and contrition up to the highest adoration and praise is based on a personal relation. Prayer implies a personal God who can hear. Providence implies one who can guide and protect. Redemption from sin implies a gracious Being who can interpose and give power for victory. Moral growth implies a human will reënforced by a divine will. Social progress implies a divinely ordained social order towards which progress may be made. Enslaved wills know they need more than is found within. They long for deliverance. They tug at the thongs which bind them and exclaim with Paul, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Twice-born men bear witness to a new

power which remade them—a power spiritual, holy, personal and redemptive.

The fatal defect in the religion of biology is its lack of redeeming power. It shows marvelous skill in tracing the stages in nature. There are first the elements and the atoms or whatever is lowest in the scale of being. Then comes inorganic matter, rising to the crystal. At length the cell, and by and by vegetal life. And then the animal cell and life, through feeling, instinct, dimly shining animal intelligence, on and on up to man, standing erect, endowed with reason, conscience, will, emotions, freedom, and an unconquerable belief in a God to whom he can pray and who can answer; and in immortality. One would naturally think of these stages as rounds of a ladder leading up to God, a stairway leading to an upper floor of the universe. As such it leads nowhere in the religion of biology. It is like a stone stairway, remaining after the house is burned. It leads up to empty space. Nature thus builds a prophecy which exactly corresponds to the longings and need of religion—a future life of fellowship with a personal God in a society of redeemed spirits ever growing in moral experience and power.

The religion of biology postulates a closed system of natural forces. All change comes about in one way. New combinations of the elements account for all. A personal divine will acting on its own account is excluded, because it would disturb the block system on which the biologist has built

the world. The future can have nothing for the individual. The species, the race, will improve. But the individual withers. Individuals fall off the tree of life like leaves in the autumn. Only the tree survives. Thus the shining rounds of nature's ladder leading up towards something more than the natural order, in the hands of the biologist, suddenly become the rods of a rotating cage in which the soul is imprisoned. It may gratify its spiritual longings by much energetic effort and passionate desire to escape, but in vain. It can only go round and round in its closed circle.

How then does the soul escape from this rotating cage of natural forces? By discovering God and by submitting to his will. In the Christian religion Christ is the Revealer of God and Redeemer of men. The difference between Christ and other Masters is his omnipresence and power. Call Buddha and Buddha does not come. Call Mohammed and Mohammed remains silent. Call Plato and Plato can only speak by his recorded words. Call Jesus Christ and he comes. It is now life itself that refutes the biological theory of life. Man now knows something higher than the new combinations of the old elements. A new force has entered. A new and "lyric" joy, as Professor James called it, enters his soul. A new power for victory becomes ours. Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. He becomes our life. Paul exclaimed, "For me to live is Christ" (Phil.

1:21). Said he: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

Christianity is an order of life. Redemption is a great form of human experience in Christ. This religion in which Christ is Redeemer and Lord is functioning on a grand scale. History teems with *gesta Christi.* The storehouse of civilization is filled with treasures which he has brought to it. To-day this religion has greater power than ever before. Great and marvelous enterprises are in progress. They rest upon the unconquerable convictions of Christ's people. The weakness and inevitable doom of the religion of biology is that it collides with this colossal movement. It clashes with the ineradicable conviction of those who know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.

In a sense we may say that the principle with which science works is uncontradicted experience. Dr. George A. Gordon says: "Science is the attempt to discover new fields of uncontradicted experience. The experiments of chemistry and physics, the conditions being the same, give uniformly the same results; in biology and physiology, allowing for the nature of the subject, the general issue is the same."[1] Thus science can, within the limits of its own method, forecast the future. But there are other realms of experience. Dr. Gordon continues, "When one reaches the spiritual level this law of existence is not changed.

[1] *The New Epoch for Faith,* p. 384.

If a man is sure of an uncontradicted experience of the love of God, he is justified in the expectation of its continuance." "In the twenty-third Psalm the writer recounts various uncontradicted experiences of the love of God and finally predicts: 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'"[2] But to be led in paths of righteousness, to be led by still waters of peace, to have a table provided in the presence of an enemy; to be relieved of fear, to have God as a comforting presence along the way—all these involve more than the reconstruction of elements in the chain of natural causes operating in a block universe. They involve freedom, fellowship, redemption and conquest. They involve the operation of personal and spiritual forces.

I conclude then that religion itself is the best reply to the biological attempt to remake religion; and that the spiritual life itself refutes the theory abstracted from the physical order which annuls all the vital meanings of spirit.

Specifically, then, the objections to the religion of science as expounded by biologists are the following:

1. First, the materials out of which the religious judgment is fashioned are only remotely related to religion. I do not say that biologists could not find religious materials. But so long as they define evolution in terms of a closed system, and all

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 384-5.

life in terms of recombinations of preëxisting forces, they cannot do so. They will have to broaden and modify their general theory before they can even tolerate the facts involved in the religious life. I am not forgetting those who have endeavored to modify the theory to accommodate the Christian and religious facts. I am only saying that these are not in the ranks of the orthodox evolutionists. They are heretics, and if they attempt aggressively to propagate the Christian essentials in the orthodox circles, they will be cried down. And this is true not only as to the supernatural essentials of New Testament Christianity, but also of religion in general. Fellowship between God and man, redemption from sin, and immortality are simply excluded by the presuppositions of Professor Conklin and those who think with him.

2. In the second place the religion of biological science concedes some of the presuppositions of religion, but does not treat them seriously. Professor Conklin admits the possibility of a first and final cause and hence a creative act of God. But at once he asserts that this cannot be proved. Then he proceeds to define the universe as if there were no creative act. It has existed from eternity. The divine immanence is all that is required. I admit and advocate the doctrine of the divine immanence. God does indwell in nature. But that is but half the truth. God is also transcendent.

As Paul says: "He is in all, through all, above all."

If the immanence of God were all the truth about God, there would be no God to worship apart from man himself. Man would then be the highest we know. God himself is not omniscient, because our own consciousness is not. There could be no religious relation between two beings, because the immanent God is all the being there is. Nature and God are identical, and man is a part of nature. The nearest God can ever come to man is in man's own thought. Any reciprocity of thought and action between God and man is out of the question. And yet this reciprocity is of the very essence of religion. The human experience which we know as religion cannot be expressed in any other terms. At best then the so-called religion of science is a soliloquy, not a dialogue. Man fights his battles with such encouragement and help as the cosmos affords. But there is no eye to pity and no arm to save. Now man's religious life simply repudiates such a view.

Thus religion itself makes short work of the modern invention offered as a substitute. Religion calls for, insists upon and actually finds Another, a gracious mighty Being whom we call Father. Christ reveals him to us. He indwells but also transcends the natural order. The universe is too small to contain his fulness. His end or purpose is not to be understood by what is

latent or potential in nature at a given stage. It reaches out to the future, unknown to us, but known to him. This is his transcendence. The merely immanent God can never know or purpose more than appears at a particular stage of being. He can never act independently of physical forces. If he has hands he wears the very thick gloves of nature. He gropes his way along. He bungles many attempts and tries again, because he has no clear vision of the future. Paderewski would make little headway as a master player if he attempted to play the piano wearing thick buckskin gloves. But he would be conscious all the time of what he was trying to do. There would be a reserve of power and resourcefulness. He would transcend in thought the performance on the keyboard with gloves. And then doubtless he would grow impatient and take off the gloves and play in his masterful way. Now the immanent God of the new religion of biology never takes off his gloves. He is shut up in the mechanical system of the block universe. Men have long since repudiated deism, or the conception of a God who made the world like a machine, started it going, and then withdrew. He might spin it round his finger, like a plaything, but he never touched it. It was a form of perpetual motion which he invented. But he himself then became a mere spectator. He took no part in its movements. Of course this is an unworthy view of God, and is much inveighed against by all modern schools.

But the new religion of biology commits the same blunder in another form. What is the difference between a God locked out of the world, and a God locked in? Deism kept God's personality, his will, his freedom, his knowledge, outside and helpless. His spiritual qualities as a free personal Being had no part or lot in the world. Men were the victims of mechanical forces. The new system ties God's hands quite as effectually by locking him inside the cosmos. God is cribbed, cabined and confined within the mechanical system.

Such a God cannot do things for his free children who need help. Even in the highest or spiritual realm he is the victim of the natural order. If he were above it and beyond it in wisdom, power, grace, and love, man might call and God might answer. But he is not above it, but only in it, saturating it indeed as water a sponge, but nothing more. He is like the armless Venus de Milo in the Louvre. When the poet Heine, broken and in despair, stood before it needing help, he spoke somewhat as follows: "My lady of Milo, I know what you would say to me if you could speak. You would say, 'Heine, I know you need help, and I would gladly give it if I could. But you can see for yourself I have no arms.'" The God of the divine immanence alone is an armless God.

It seems strange that this new biological religion, which is without prayer or fellowship with

God, without individual salvation, without resurrection and without immortality, does not take the fundamental human religious instincts more seriously. Belief in a transcendent God and belief in immortality are practically universal among men. The late Professor Fiske made a rather striking biological argument for God's existence. Life involves adjustment of the internal relations of the organism to the external relations of the environment. God as objective, transcendent, must exist as the environment which sustains man's undying belief in him. Otherwise the belief would die. Belief in immortality may be vindicated in the same way. Why, then, does not the religion of biology reckon with these facts? It is because they involve elements irreconcilable with their closed system. They involve freedom, personality, spiritual life, different in kind from the mechanical system. They involve will as a force in the world. In short they supply the postulates on which Christianity rests. These apostles of biological religion see very clearly that if they concede these great fundamentals of man's religious life the door is opened for the return of everything they have exorcised. The incarnation and the miracles and the resurrection of Christ could find plenty of room in a universe reconstructed on the basis of personality, freedom, redemption, immortality.

3. Professor Conklin insists that the new religion of biological science is not atheistic. It is of course conceded here that the word God is used,

and religion is recognized in some vague way. The reason many have deemed the system atheistic is that its god seems to do nothing worthy of his name. Professor Conklin ridicules what are alleged as current conceptions of God; for example, God is thought of as a "good man" up in the skies or under some such form. But surely he cannot be in earnest in this if he has reference to scholars who, as evangelical Christians, have set forth the idea of God. Professor Conklin's god, however, never becomes disentangled from the mesh-work of natural forces. As a consequence he never does anything which nature itself cannot do. "Accepting the universe," therefore, in the phrase of Mr. Burroughs, is about all that the idea of God and religion yields in the new system. Religion itself cools into an abstract philosophy of life, and religion becomes a sort of stoicism of submission and struggle.

4. The new system insists that it is altruistic. It preaches the doctrine of service. But it supplies no incentive or inspiration. And if human history teaches anything clearly it is that love is the hardest of all virtues to cultivate because man is inherently selfish. The supreme need of man, therefore, is not to unfold something which he already has, but to be born again by the divine Spirit. Christianity supplies this need. The new birth is the starting point of the Christian life. The supreme incentive is the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

5. Again the new system, as we have seen, traces religion to the emotions. Conklin declares that it is thus contrasted with science which is intellectual in aim. But as such he does not leave it. When he finishes with it the emotional element is left out. The fact is that religion includes cognition or knowledge as well as emotion. Schleiermacher overstated the case when he defined religion as pure feeling. But even so, religion does involve the deepest emotion: love to God, adoration of God, humility before God, trust in God, repentance for sins against God, submission to God's will and eternal hope in God. All this implies a sense of God's protection and care: the green pastures, the still waters, the refreshment of spirit, the protection against foes, and the assurance of everlasting security of the twenty-third Psalm. All this implies a God personal, gracious, tender, capable of loving and of being loved. That is, it implies a universe emotionally rational.

Now in the new religion of biological science, all this is subtly transformed into forms of rationality of another kind. God becomes an immanent force rather than a person. The only object of love is a system of mechanical causes and effects. A man submits to the cosmos rather than to the God of the cosmos. There can be but one outcome of this method. One by one all the distinctive marks of religion, as such, disappear. The religious ideals become so many values. These values are gradually "transvaluated" into other values.

The emotional thus become intellectual values. Finally, in the hands of a logical thinker, like Hofding, these values are converted into scientific ideals, and religion passes away as an outgrown superstition. As one follows the deft hand of the modern biologist rewriting the meaning of religion, it is easy to be deceived. The ink is almost, if not quite invisible at places. When the acid test of religion itself is applied the writing becomes very distinct, and one discovers the descriptive outline of a new face. Religion has disappeared and biology complacently occupies the throne.

6. From the religious point of view the fatal defect in the process of the biologist is that he has denied to religion its own rights. He has stifled its voice. He has made religion a by-product of something else. It is an incidental result of the struggle for life in the biological series. It lasts no longer than it is useful. Like any other organ it grows stunted and disappears when its function is not discharged. It is a sort of vermiform appendix to the social organism, dangerous when inflamed. A surgical operation is the only safe method. And so we have a host of biological surgeons eager to perform the operation. Professor Leuba in a recent book claims to have proved that the operation has already been successfully performed in the universities of America. I do not accept this conclusion, although the situation is serious enough.

The most telling plea the surgeons make is that

young, educated America demands that we abandon the New Testament faith for the new faith of biological science. But when the returns are all in it will be found that the demand of our youth has been created by the surgeons themselves. A particular form of culture has borne fruit. We now have a class who demand a class religion. The faith is so intellectualized as to ignore half of man's rational nature and needs. It is as little capable of slaking the religious thirst of mankind as a snowball is capable of extinguishing the fires of Mount Vesuvius. Biological science has thus failed at a vital point. It has failed in its loyalty to fact. Religion stands on its own merits. It exists by its own rights. It does not ask the permission of biology. It is a fact not to be explained away, but to be accepted. It is an order of reality, and cannot be reduced to alien principles or modes or functions.

7. Finally, the biological reconstruction of religion is condemned because it reduces religion as such to futility. The God of religion is, and is known to be a spiritual personal Being, separate from man in his personality, holy and loving. He must be a distinct personality else there can be no fellowship between God and man. A pantheistic universe with an impersonal God can not serve the ends of religion or ethics or sociology. He must be a spiritual being because we find in nature below the spiritual nothing answering to the God we find in religious experience. He must

be a holy and loving being else our fellowship within him has no meaning. He redeems from sin and its power. He guides through life's devious ways. He creates the endless hope. He reenforces the weak and wavering human will. He is the God of religion as religion, not of biology, as currently interpreted.

According to the biological reconstruction of religion, nature builds up all the religious aspirations and hopes and then leaves them unsatisfied. By much labor and pains she builds the great personality, with implications and aspirations and belief in immortality. Nature's aim seems to be definite and unerring. But when the shot is fired it proves to be a blank cartridge. Personality is snuffed out like a candle. She slowly builds up belief in a personal, transcendent, holy and loving God. But again she fires a blank cartridge because God is reduced to the limits of a force immanent in the cosmos. So also she builds belief in immortality, spreads it to all nations, kindreds and tribes, perfecting it in a great movement known as Christianity. But again she fires a blank cartridge. The only immortality which can be alleged is that of influence, of a growing social order. Thus while nature makes a mighty demonstration towards these great ideals, and fires many a shot, it turns out in the end to be a fusillade of blank cartridges. It is in this way that modern biology would reconstruct religion. And this is why religion enters her everlasting No.

This is why religion is in revolt. This is why the modern issue is becoming so clear, and, also why the outcome is becoming so certain. Biology can no more reconstruct religion thus than it can make Niagara Falls flow up instead of down, than it can turn back the Atlantic tide or alter the course of the planets in our solar system.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMPROMISE

In the preceding chapter it was made clear that religion loses nearly all its valuable elements as recreated by current biology. When in man's thought God ceases to be a transcendent Being; when the soul ceases to be immortal; when personality pales into a transient glow on the canvas of reality; when human hope loses all its contents save the improvement of the social order on earth; and when the moral and spiritual power needed by man becomes one of a chain of physical causes and effects in a biological series—I say, when all these things take place, it is easy to see that religion, in its normal meaning as it has been understood heretofore, collapses. It is almost as empty as a last year's bird's nest.

The inevitable recoil has followed. Men are unwilling to accept all that is bound up in the new religion of biology. As a result we have a compromise movement between this and Christianity. It is a religion based upon a non-Christian theism. The religion of biology is in effect a form of pantheism. It makes nothing of God beyond what we see in the natural order. "Nature is everything that is." If God is, he is simply nature or merely immanent in it. And this is pantheism. Chris-

tianity is theistic. God is a person. He is a spiritual being. He has intelligence and will and consciousness. He has purpose. He loves. He has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, in incarnation, in miracle, in a sinless life, in resurrection, in a spiritual progressive Kingdom. Man is made in God's image. He is redeemed by God's saving grace in Christ. He is immortal. His sense of imperfection is a mark of his perfection. The outcome is a perfected moral and spiritual Kingdom holy and eternal.

The compromise view lies between the Christian and the biological. It falls in with the current biological rejection of the supernatural elements in the Gospels. It thinks little of Paul as an interpreter of Christianity. It reverences Jesus as a great teacher, but not as the eternal Son of God and Redeemer of man. It joins in the attack upon the supernatural elements in the New Testament. It employs the favorite modern weapons in this attack, historical criticism, comparative religion, psychology, philosophical speculation, and in general the current biological methods. But it refuses to go with biology in some of its logical deductions. In particular it insists that God is a person and that the soul of man is immortal. It argues for a future life, but denies the resurrection of Christ. It is very fond of the doctrine of the divine immanence, but insists also upon the divine transcendence. In a word it reduces religion to its lowest terms. It retains indeed some

of the central truths. The personality of God, the personality of man and immortality are basic truths of religion. But it comes far short of the conception of the Christian revelation of God in Christ.

Now the theistic view of the universe is the strongest in its appeal to reason. At any rate that is the view of the writer of these pages. I am quite aware of the numerous current modern variations and negations of theism. In a later chapter the rational principle itself will be considered in its bearing on the Christian religion. For the present I wish to consider briefly the strength of the theistic conception in its logical foundations, and to show further its weakness and inadequacy, by itself, to support man's religious life.

In his very interesting book, *The Truths We Live By,* Professor J. W. Hudson sums up in a scholarly and at the same time popular way, the bases of our fundamental religious beliefs. The modern man, he holds, is right in insisting that reason be satisfied. He is wrong in assuming that modern science is the only "way of reason." Reason arrives at perfectly satisfying conclusions by other than scientific methods. He says it is irrational to assume "that the ways of reason and the ways of science are identical; and that when science has had its say, reason also has had its last word."[1]

[1] P. 93.

In accordance with this he proceeds to show that there are items in our knowledge which science does not supply. For example I know that I am I. I know that life is worth while. I know that friendship is a noble thing. I know that the Venus de Milo is beautiful. I know that some causes are worthy of sacrifice and death.[2] If the scientist denies that we "know" these things in the sense of proving them, he destroys in principle the foundations of science. For science rests upon unproved assumptions. These are the laws of universal causation, the law of the uniformity of nature, the existence of time and space and so forth. They are not demonstrated truths. They are accepted as presuppositions. And yet the very life of science depends upon them.

You cannot prove scientifically the law of universal causation because the universe is so much larger than the range of our observation. Why then does science assume it and related truths? Ultimately because without them you could have no science. These assumptions are the rock foundation of science. But at once another question arises: why have science at all? Can you prove scientifically that it is necessary to have science? The world got along without it a very long time. The true justification of science is that it serves human life; "that by it and it alone much of the significant progress of civilization has been made

[2] P. 94.

possible." And now what is it that justifies human life? "The only justification that human beings can give for living is that they find life desirable, that they want it." Nobody knows why they want it, but they do. This desire for life with all that it implies is a fact, a truth. You know it as you know that you are you. But life implies not only the need of science to serve it, but also that there are ideals to satisfy it. The distinction between right and wrong, the desire for righteousness, immortality, self-realization in the full sense, and all the great spiritual ideals are at the heart of man's desire for life. Thus the desire for life, if it vindicates a science which enables it to make progress, at the same time vindicates a worthy goal towards which progress is made.[3] Professor Hudson proceeds to develop the great ideals in a convincing way, which it is not necessary to pursue further here. God and immortality are facts and life is based upon belief in them.

Another instructive example is Mr. A. J. Balfour's *Theism and Humanism*. The argument is based upon the existence in men of "inevitable beliefs." We believe certain things and act upon them inevitably in our reactions to the world. We cannot "suppose the world to be emptied of persons who think, who feel, who will; or of things which are material, independent, extended, and enduring. We cannot doubt that such entities exist, nor that they act on one another, nor that

[3] See *The Truths We Live By*, pp. 99-113.

they are in space and time."[4] Mr. Balfour mentions two other kinds of belief which are inevitable. "One of them relates to ends and includes morals; while the other relates to objects of contemplative interest among which is beauty."[4]

These beliefs are stated in their best form as held by modern men in western civilization. They are stages in man's progress, but they are of permanent value. The argument undertakes to show that these inevitable beliefs cannot be explained on the basis of Naturalism without doing fatal damage to their credit. He says: "The answer I shall give to this last question will be in the negative. And if the alternative to Naturalism be Theism, as from the common sense standpoint it certainly is, then the effect of my argument, for those who accept it, will be to link up a belief in God with all that is or seems most beautiful in art or nature, and all that is or seems most noble in morality."[5] It is not my purpose to trace Mr. Balfour's argument in detail, but simply to indicate its general character. In his concluding chapter he writes: "My desire has been to show that all we think best in human culture, whether associated with beauty, goodness, or knowledge, requires God for its support, that Humanism without Theism loses more than half its value." Again he insists that we must find a congruous origin for our highest beliefs and emotions. "Beauty must be more than an accident. The

[4] P. 30. [5] P. 33.

source of morality must be moral. The source of knowledge must be rational. If this be granted, you rule out Mechanism, you rule out Naturalism, you rule out Agnosticism; and a lofty form of Theism becomes, as I think, inevitable."[6]

I have selected the two types of theistic belief represented by Professor Hudson and Mr. Balfour because they are among the simplest and least speculative, and also because they are very modern in their point of view. There are innumerable others who might be cited. The theism of the late Professor Robert Flint, of Professor Ladd, that reflected in the writings of President Hibben, the Personalism of Professor Bowne, and the whole line of thinkers who in a greater or less degree reproduce the thought of Lotze, and many others might be mentioned. But the two books quoted above serve best the present purpose because they deal most directly with the question of theism, and in this way touch vitally the interests of religion as distinguished from the interests of speculative thought.

Hudson and Balfour reach their conclusions not so much by argument as by an appeal to fact. And it is this appeal which gives power to their conclusions. The universe is construed under the impelling motive of loyalty to fact. The supreme fact as known to our experience is our own selves, our personalities, and our potentialities. Man, the star-gazer, with longings for the infinite, is ac-

[6] Pp. 248-250.

cepted at face value. Man with an unsatisfied love of truth, of beauty, of righteousness, is bidden welcome into the charmed circle of the Real. He is not like the snow-drift on the river, a moment white, then gone forever. Man with will, intellect, emotions, with personality and social relationships, is not a fact to be explained away, but a fact to be accepted and accounted for. All his endowments point to God.

So also these writers accept nature and the laws of nature. They recognize the greatness and nobility of science and the scientific spirit. They would abate nothing from natural law. But their loyalty to fact is not provincial. It is as broad as reality. It is jealous of all attempts to fashion a cup too small to contain all the facts when men attempt to make world-views. They refuse to measure man by nature, or nature by man. They recognize both and in relating them to each other they find God. That is to say, they have discovered that the universe is rational at all points, emotionally, esthetically, morally, volitionally and religiously as well as in the ordinary meaning of the word. Personality with its implications is taken in all seriousness and the resulting world-view corresponds. Having said this we have laid the rational foundations for the Christian religion. I do not mean that Christianity is derived from philosophy. Far from it. Christ is himself the supreme fact of all history. The Christian religion sprang from his personality and work. As

facts of history these stand on their own merit. They are not to be accommodated to something else, or trimmed to every passing breeze of human thought. But for those who demand a basis in reason prior to considering the Christian facts, theism is the starting point. Mr. Balfour goes on logically to the Christian conclusions as will appear later. I am not informed as to Professor Hudson, but see no reason why he should not do so.

I now hasten to remark that theism alone is not enough to supply the needs of religion. It is now, and always has been since Christ came, a form of thought with a tendency to go forward to the Christian position, or backward to Naturalism. One of the most unfortunate phases of the present situation is that there are leaders of thought, calling themselves Christian, who are merely theists. The danger lies in putting the Christian label on a non-Christian or half-Christian world-view. This so-called Christian or half-Christian world-view classes Jesus with Plato, Buddha, Socrates and other great teachers. His knowledge of God was due to his human insight, not to a unique relation as divine Son to an eternal Father. His supernatural works and resurrection from the dead are disallowed as contrary to natural law. The future life is accepted, but no appeal is made in its defense to the resurrection of Christ. This form of so-called Christian theism is always under the influence of the law of physical continuity. It feels constantly the backward pull of

Naturalism. It begins well but comes to a bad end. It sets out to recognize human personality with its meaning, and ends by denying the resurrection of the body and leaving a half instead of a whole man. It sets out with the idea of the personality of God and pares down the conception almost beyond recognition in particular applications. For example, God's personality clearly implies a revelation of God's will to man to aid him in his struggle with sin and suffering. But the backward tug of Naturalism is felt at once and such revelation is denied. It would compromise Naturalism at all other points if this were granted. So also non-Christian theism begins by recognizing human freedom. If consistent it would proceed in a straight line to a rounded spiritual view of the universe in which religion would come to its rights. But modern psychology in the form of Behaviorism bars the way. Man's choices are regarded by it as links in the physical series of causes and effects. Thus the idea of freedom which should be understood in the light of Christ's teaching, sinks back into the quicksand of Naturalism and very nearly disappears. More formally stated the reasons for rejecting a non-Christian theism as insufficient for man's religious life are the following:

First of all it is a compromise and inconsistent world-view. This is not to deny its strength as compared with Materialism or Agnosticism or any form of Atheism. The point is that it is a com-

promise between a fully rounded Christian view on the one hand and Naturalism on the other. It borrows much from Christianity. Its conception of God, its ideal of personality, freedom and immortality are greatly reënforced if not actually produced by Christian teaching. But when the Christian miracles are confronted, they are rejected on naturalistic grounds. Freedom and personality in God and man are the postulates on which the supernatural is based. Non-Christian theism admits these but denies the evidence for the supernatural in the Gospels. It looks forward to a divine and eternal Kingdom of free spirits in its assumptions. Then it looks backward to the natural order and the series of physical causes in its constructive attempt. It feels the tug of the religious needs of men when it contemplates the arid desert of Naturalism. And then it surrenders to the natural order when it confronts the problem of a Christ who was supernatural in origin and who rose from the dead.

The outcome of this compromise position is inevitable. The theory must forever fight for its life. Those who advocate man's full religious rights attack it because it provides not even a half-loaf of spiritual bread. On the other side it is attacked by physical science because it assumes freedom and personality in God and man. And these are inconsistent with the doctrine of continuity. The theory is like a tennis ball racketed back and forth by two players, one of whom is a

highly specialized science and the other thoroughgoing religion. It satisfies neither. It must either go forward or backward.

Again, non-Christian theism is self-contradictory in its ideas of God and man. It insists especially upon the immanence of God, although it admits transcendence in a theoretical way. Immanence and transcendence are half-truths. The two together are the truth.

Transcendence is a half-truth. God outside the world is out of the reach of man and his needs. Man in that case is a lonely wanderer on a very cold winter day, half-clad and starving. The God we know in religion, and the God who is revealed in Christ is an immanent God. In Tennyson's much quoted lines:

> "Closer is he than breathing,
> Nearer than hands and feet."

So also is immanence a half-truth. A moment's reflection will make this clear. Immanence, taken by itself, means God's complete indwelling in the world everywhere and at all times, but not outside or above the world anywhere at any time. Any cross-section of the world at any stage of a progressive universe would be a total revelation of all that God is at that stage. Let us take the fire mist or an earlier stage when the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. The immanent God at that stage

was not a conscious personal being because by the presupposition of the theory these did not appear until later. Personality and consciousness in the fire mist stage implies transcendence—something in God above and beyond what was in the fire mist. The modern notion that God himself has grown to consciousness and personality, or that these do not exist save as they appear in man, is an idea that satisfies neither the reason nor the heart. If non-Christian theism would practice more consistently its professed belief in both immanence and transcendence mutual understanding would be promoted in religious and scientific circles. The fact is that while it often professes belief in the personality and transcendence of God, it is often content with a pantheistic interpretation of the world according to which the divine being "sleeps in the plant, dreams in the animal, and wakes in man."

And this leads to a remark about man. In religion the core and center of all is fellowship with God. This necessarily implies personality in God. It means also prayer and its answer. The "I" and the "Thou" of man's fellowship with God are both real. Otherwise religion is a soliloquy, a monologue, in which man alone speaks. On this supposition religion dies of inanition. There is no vitality, no motive power, in it. If God merely "wakes" in man and has no separate existence and personality, prayer is simply man talking to himself. If "he seems to hear a heavenly friend,

and through thick veils to apprehend a labor working to an end," it is a delusion of the heart which the sophisticated intellect will in due time destroy.

Now non-Christian theism plays fast and loose with the idea of prayer and fellowship. Its postulates leave room for both. Its explanations usually leave much to be desired. The reason is that in its postulates it seeks to conciliate religion, while in its explanations it seeks to conciliate science. If God really hears and answers prayer, if he is a real personality to whom man can speak and who can speak to man, then there is something more than physical continuity in the universe. It is our Father's house, and in it are many abiding-places for beloved children, whose supreme motive and inspiration is to walk in righteousness and love, to be well pleasing unto him. But instantly objection is made. If the universe is like that the door is wide open for an incarnation, for miracles, for the resurrection. And the objection is well-taken, for the door is opened wide for these things by the theistic postulates.

For one thing the door is open wide for a supernatural revelation. If God cares for man he will not forever remain dumb. If man needs his divine help he will appear in history as a gracious saving God. Dr. James Orr says: "I think I am justified in saying that when the ground of divine revelation is once left behind, we have no logical halting-place short of Agnosticism; not because a theistic view of the universe is unreason-

able, but because a living Theism requires as its complement belief in Revelation. We have these alternatives: either to revivify our Theism till it approaches to the humane and loving attributes it ascribes to God, the Christian conception of the heavenly Father—in which case we are back to a supernatural view of the universe; or if this is thought baseless, to dispense with the idea of God altogether, and try to explain the world without reason, without final cause, without spiritual assumptions of any kind."[7]

If the idea of a personal God is to be of any value for men, God must be a Being who can *do* things. An idle God who does nothing is of no avail. And a God who can do no more than nature does is of no avail. In that event we are locked up hopelessly in the chain of continuity along with God. And this is the end of religion. In his *Carlyle,* Mr. Froude relates a conversation with Carlyle just before the death of the latter: "I once said to him, not long before his death, that I could only believe in a God which *did* something. With a cry of pain which I shall never forget, he said, 'He does nothing!'" Now this cry of the human heart is irrepressible. There is in us an imperious need and demand which feel outraged at the thought of a God who exists but never speaks or acts. Men of faith who know Christ and God's gracious action through him slake their spiritual thirst at the fountain of experience. God in Christ

[7] *Christian View of God and the World,* p. 51.

becomes as real to them as the sun in the heavens. The road to despair is the belief that God is a personal transcendent or immanent Being who never speaks. A dumb God is worthless for religion. And a God who never rises above the natural order, never speaks save in the rearrangements and new combinations of atoms, is certain to die out of man's life like the lingering echo of a sound which grows fainter with each repetition until it is followed by dead silence.

Along with the idea of revelation goes that of Providence. In the Christian life and experience the evidence of divine guidance, of an individual life plan, of a gracious guiding Presence is convincing beyond all peradventure. Of course such guidance implies a docile will, a trustful heart. Certainly it is conditioned upon a right spiritual attitude. But this is the secret of the Christian religion. He that willeth to do God's will shall know the teaching. There is no external placarding of the truth. There is no mathematical demonstration. There is no coercive logic. The Incarnation was God's entrance into history. In a short three years' ministry the outward demonstration was complete. Henceforth it became a spiritual process based upon historical facts. Without those facts the entire problem of God recedes into the vagueness and inconclusiveness of pre-Christian ages. Plato longed for a revelation because he could not find God by speculative thought. The Christian religion gives the prac-

tical demonstration of God in the unity, the progressiveness, the joy and the moral and spiritual fulness of a life "under the eye and in the strength" of the heavenly Father.

This chapter would not be complete without an example of the compromise form of doctrine I have discussed. I select one of many examples in a late volume by a Professor of Theology in an American Theological Seminary. *The Idea of God* is the title. The author is Professor Clarence A. Beckwith. The discussion covers a wide range. There is no need for a full review of this volume here. I have done so in another connection.[8] The idea of God which grows out of the exposition is the chief point for my purpose. The author holds that the new scientific and social movement demands a new conception of God.[9] After reviewing the history of the idea of God, he states it in relation to the "doctrine of cause."[10] He says: "What we term cause has no other significance than uniform and consistent variation among phenomena. All the processes of the physical world are ruled by necessity." "Any other theory of cause introduces a perfectly superfluous and futile notion into our thought of reality."[11] This is the key to the whole conception. On page 128 Professor Beckwith says: "If we

[8] See *Review and Expositor,* January, 1923, pp. 63ff.
[9] Chapter I.
[10] Chapter V.
[11] P. 119.

have any longer need of God, and if he is to sustain any relation to the facts of life, it must be not as an external control, but as an immanent purposive will, inseparable from natural selection." The phrase "purposive will" sounds well, but we shall see that the author in its use is not thinking of what is really meant by it. To limit the idea of cause to mechanical necessity in nature, and to limit the idea of God to an immanent relation to nature, very nearly settles other questions about God in advance. We shall see what becomes of the "purposive will" in the resultant doctrine of God.

Professor Beckwith discusses the question of the personality of God. Personality in man as defined by Professor Bowne, he rejects. It includes "self-hood, self-consciousness, self-control, and the power to know." Professor Beckwith says: "In the nature of the case, human personality as we know it, however splendid its attainments, can never be anything else in an individual than transient and incomplete, in the race pressing on toward a receding goal."[12] "If this is to be the standard of personality, then God is both sub- and super-, perhaps extra-personal."[13] One wonders where any spiritual dimension for measuring the extra-personal is to be found. Nature below man is the sub-personal. Superior beings with personal attributes might be super-personal. But where is the third personal dimension? Pro-

[12] Pp. 291-2. [13] P. 292.

fessor Beckwith invents it by affirming and denying personal qualities in God in the same breath.

Professor Beckwith says: "To assert that God is perfect personality of which man is but a faint copy is open to many objections." This idea he rejects, because the personal qualities in man are imperfect. The alternative is on the one hand to redefine personality "so as to eliminate all that gives zest to life," or, on the other, "if we retain that which makes life personal and vivid, we must carry this over to God and find in him one who shares our struggle and suffering."[14] But this leads to the idea of a finite God. In this emergency many turn to Jesus Christ, and put him in the place of God. Others turn to social service and dismiss the idea of God from their practical consideration.[15] "Not infrequently the two paths are merged in one, and Jesus, as representative of personal values, is made the leader in the recreation of society. But however highly we estimate the power of Jesus and the social ideal, we cannot fail to recognize that in this program the dynamic of belief in a personal God as an impetus to individual and social regeneration is hindered and repressed."[16] This is a warning to social reformers. Don't pin your faith to Jesus if you want the dynamic of a valid idea of God. Jesus represses and hinders. Professor Beckwith then fares forth to find the true conception of God and personality.

[14] P. 294. [15] P. 295. [16] P. 296.

He arrives at the idea of personality by relating it to purposive ends. "Our proposition is that the notion and degree of personality are determined by the number and quality of ends connected with it." Again: "Purposive ends are, however, only partially present in any man, or indeed in all men together, but to the extent to which they are present, men are persons."[17] Now the author finds certain ends in the universe. The purposive good will exists, but it is a tendency rather than a definite purpose. It is called rather a "tendency" or "impulse" towards something. "We may define this tendency by various names as nature, cosmic force, the will to live, creative impulse, infinite and eternal energy, or having regard to the experience and custom of the Anglo-Saxon people, we may call it God."[18] The transcendent element in this being is nothing more than a tendency to something higher. We do not know whether he remembers the past or has any foreknowledge of the future. The author says: "The question as to how far there is a divine memory and a divine anticipation, distinct and separate from the world-process, is one of deep interest but one which we may not be in a position to solve."[19] There is much more in this vein. It is obvious that the "world-process" is the main thing. The "purposive good will" turns out to be nothing more definite than the world process.

In accordance with this view of God every ele-

[17] Pp. 297. [18] Pp. 156-7. [19] P. 270.

ment in religion is changed. Adoration of God is transformed into a new respect for nature.[20] Prayers are all at heart one "to seek and to find the meaning of the Purposive Good Will in every particular condition and then to make that will our own."[21] There is no personal relation in religion except with our fellow men. We speak of "divine service" in prayer and praise. This is a "relic of the time when men supposed that worship could be perpendicular, ascending straight to heaven. We, however, in our day, know that all our services are social."[22] Sorrow and suffering are hard to understand, but we must believe that somehow they are in harmony with the Purposive Good Will. What of immortality? Speaking of man's joy, love, hope, memory, defeat, victory, the author adds: "And crowning all, desire for continued life after death; but whether we shall realize this in prolonged individual consciousness or only join 'the Choir Invisible,' experience here below offers us no lighted torch. We may read fairy tales, we may listen to marvelous prophecies of the future unfolded by men who talk in their sleep; such things signify nothing. Our task is single and perfectly simple—to ascertain what kind of a world the Creative Good Will is actualizing here and now in the short space of our earthly life, to calculate the 'risks' which are probable, and the events which are sure, and then adjust ourselves, not with the hard temper of the

[20] P. 323. [21] P. 327. [22] P. 330.

Stoic, but faithfully and bravely, even if at times sadly, to our task." [23]

Thus closes a book of between three and four hundred pages of speculation about God. It is open to criticism in so many forms one scarcely knows where to begin. It is open to criticism from the scientific standpoint because it is disloyal to the fact of human personality and freedom. By definition and presupposition it cancels free will as a fact and cause. Freedom is allowed no place in Reality. The book is philosophically weak for several reasons. It avoids any metaphysical construction, but ends in a practical pantheism. It is a view almost identical with that of John Burroughs in the book, *Accepting the Universe,* which I shall later discuss. In fact the author himself accepts Burroughs' view.[24] It is weak philosophically also because its constructive principle is a pure abstraction. The Creative Good Will is not sub-personal (taken from below man), nor super-personal (taken from a higher than human consciousness), but extra-personal (really taken from nowhere). Professor Beckwith denies that he imports the Creative Good Will into nature, and claims that he finds it there. But the conception of will is unknown to us except as we know it in man. Thus the theory is defective in psychology. In man we only know will in the context of a wider consciousness of thought, emotions, conscience. Our author dissects the will out

[23] Pp. 334-5. [24] P. 334.

of its place in man, ascribes it to nature as creative and good, but denies that it is accompanied by consciousness in the ordinary sense. This to him is wrong because it would be "psychologizing" God and nature. Far better would it be philosophically to call it a Force or Power rather than a will. A will which does not remember the past or anticipate the future is nothing more than an impulse, at best. If there is any one thing required by "a sound metaphysic" in modern thought it is that philosophic theory must be anchored to Reality at some definite point. Professor Beckwith's world view is based upon a fiction of the imagination in the form of a detached will floating around apart from consciousness and endowed with the attributes of creativeness and goodness. It can only survive in the court of rationality if we allow the medieval method of deducing the universe from an abstraction.

The theory is futile from the religious standpoint. A God who does not remember the past or foreknow the future has no appeal to the worshiper. Hence worship in the proper sense disappears in Professor Beckwith's system. A personal God who knows, loves, plans, protects, and guides is the need of religion. So also there is no dynamic for moral struggle if man perishes like the beasts. "The choir invisible" with its immortality of influence merely may be the expression of a stoic philosophy of life. But it has no world-lifting power.

Professor Beckwith walks unwarily into that Cave of the Winds whence issue many philosophical theories, known as Naturalism. He nowhere deals with man as a religious being. Everywhere he is concerned with another side of his nature, the intellectual. He calls his system "ethical monotheism," but with little to justify the name. Usually we speak of the doctrine of God in the Old Testament as "Ethical Monotheism." But the God of the Old Testament is intensely personal. His features are clear-cut and unmistakable. Beckwith's idea of God is like a vague image formed by a cloud-bank. It seems at first glance to have the recognizable features of a personal being. But while you gaze these melt away into the indefiniteness of an "impulse" or "tendency" without consciousness, without memory or a preconceived goal. All the eager longings of man's spirit for fellowship with God, for forgiveness, for redemption, and for immortality are quenched. With one push of the button the light of religion is extinguished and man's spiritual home is plunged in darkness. It is not surprising that the book ends with a note of pessimism.

This book is a type of a large class. It attempts the impossible task of trying to save religion on non-religious assumptions. You cannot expunge personality from the universe and make any headway defining or defending religion. If continuity in the physical sense is all there is, why delude yourself with spiritual values? You cannot eat

your cake and keep it too. Man's religious nature says: "Give me a God worth while, or else abolish him altogether. Don't try to deceive me with a compromise, something which answers neither the soul's needs nor the requirements of nature's mechanism."

The reader should remember that I am not here dealing with the philosophical aspects of the theistic problem. I shall come to these later. Here I am trying to show that religion has its rights which cannot be gainsaid, and that non-Christian theism robs religion of those rights. The idea of God which it assumes is drawn helplessly in two directions. Naturalism pulls it back down to the level of cosmic forces. Personalism pulls it up towards the level of freedom and redemption. It sets out bravely with a resolution to be loyal to both the facts of the real world; the fact of man and his religious needs, and the fact of nature and law. But it usually ends timidly by refusing to take religion seriously and subordinating it to the reign of law as expressed in the mechanics of nature.

CHAPTER VII

DEHUMANIZING RELIGION

I may sum up the preceding points in the statement that the current non-Christian theism is weak because it dehumanizes religion. It destroys the elements in religion which make it workable for man. It remolds it in the interest of a supposed intellectual demand. It conceives of God as a Person and then treats him as a Power. It conceives of a Being capable of speaking to man, and then closes his lips. It begins by regarding God as having capacity for answering prayer and then ties both his hands behind his back with the law of physical continuity. It seems to deal seriously with the principle of freedom in God and man. But in the impotencies which it alleges, freedom becomes a fiction, and fatalism ascends the throne. It begins by a brave word about Providence, and ends by converting it into a succession of events in a physical series. The world is like a music box constructed to play a series of tunes. You wind it up. The tunes begin, and the machinery does the rest. Man is not a listener apart from the box. He is simply one of the tunes which the cosmic box is able to play.

And in fact this non-Christian theism makes a travesty of the greatest of all religious ideas—the

Fatherhood of God. "Your heavenly Father" was a phrase constantly on the lips of Jesus as he addressed his disciples. It is a favorite one with the advocates of the current non-Christian theism. But it is almost completely dehumanized. I do not mean that the idea of Fatherhood is robbed of the elements of human fatherhood, although this is true. I mean chiefly that the idea of the divine Fatherhood is robbed of most if not all the elements which are required by man in religion.

Look at it for a moment. Above all religious ideas Fatherhood requires freedom of intercourse with sons and daughters. "Be ye imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love." With a sense of being the beloved of God, let your conduct correspond by a free and not compulsory imitation of him. "In nothing be anxious, but in everything make your requests known unto God." "Ask and ye shall receive." "If ye know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him." Here we have the very essence of the idea of free intercourse. Throughout the New Testament God's Fatherhood is free, gracious, yearning, seeking, ever eager to bless, to communicate. Everywhere the children are exhorted to come boldly and confidently to him for help. And yet modern naturalism has blurred and defaced the ideal of God's Fatherhood. Even theology has sometimes yielded and God's im-

mutability or unchangeableness has been urged against the idea of answer to prayer.

But God's unchangeableness is the very foundation and guaranty of the answer to prayer. This will appear the moment theism has the courage to accept its own postulate thoroughly. What non-Christian theism usually says is that God is a God of unchangeable natural law. Thus it negates the idea of personality with which it began. But what Jesus taught his disciples was that God is unchangeably their heavenly Father. God loves his children with a Father's unchangeable love. Apply the attribute of unchangeableness to him as Father and a flood of light bursts upon the whole question. Nothing can ever swerve him from Fatherhood. If the cosmos were bigger than it is, it would not alter this spiritual relation to his children. It is clear that if God cannot take his child to his bosom, he is no longer Father. If he cannot heal the broken heart, forgive the penitent, reënforce the feeble will, he has abdicated the place of Father. If he cannot answer prayer, if he cannot protect the life of his child, his character as Father has vanished. If God cannot enter the world to redeem it when such entry becomes necessary he has changed. The failure of Fatherhood in any crucial test is evidence of a changing, a mutable God. It is because he is eternally what he is that he is everlasting Father.

Now religion never rises to its heights without

this idea of Fatherhood. Christ gave it in its perfect form. It has fed men spiritually two thousand years. Of course Materialism, and Agnosticism, and a number of forms of Monistic philosophy, deny it. So also the compromise non-Christian theism of the day, in its overweening regard for the claims of Naturalism, leaves it so weakened and impoverished that it is of little value. It is dehumanized. It fails to support man's spirit, because it ignores his needs out of a false deference to the causal series in nature. Those needs must be met. Natural law and sonship and true Fatherhood can live together in peace in God's world, because no one of them was meant to cancel the others. Both law and sonship are grounded in God's nature and this is the guaranty of the rights of science and the rights of religion.

It may be said with confidence that until current non-Christian theism accepts the implications of its own standpoint, it can render little service to struggling humanity. Mr. Balfour, in the concluding chapter of his *Theism and Humanism,* already reviewed, says: "Now, if I were asked what categories or conceptions such a point of view required for its expression, I should answer Providence and Inspiration—categories for which systematic philosophy has so far found no great use." The reasons are given for this statement. Among other things he says that Providence and Inspiration "concentrate attention upon the humanistic side of Theism, on the relation of God

to man, and to man's higher spiritual needs. Divine 'guidance'—the purposeful working of informing Spirit—is the notion on which emphasis is especially laid. The term 'Providence,' suggests this in a broad general way. The term 'Inspiration' suggests it in the narrower sphere of beliefs and emotions."[1]

There is no spiritual comfort for man in a dumb universe. Unless Theism becomes articulate on the divine side, it might as well remain pure Naturalism, with no affirmation about a personal God. For most men the latter is the road to despair. Even thinkers and philosophers find the air of such a system suffocating. It breeds pessimism.

Professor Clifford is quoted as saying: "It cannot be doubted that the theistic belief is a comfort to those who hold it, and that the loss of it is a very painful loss. It cannot be doubted, at least by many of us in this generation, who either profess it now, or have received it in our childhood, and have parted with it since with such searching trouble as only the cradle faiths can cause. We have seen the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven to light up a soulless earth; we have felt with utter loneliness that the Great Companion is dead."

And here are words from Professor Seeley which indicate a clear insight into the religious need of man: "When the supernatural does not

[1] P. 267.

come in to overwhelm the natural, and turn life upside down, when it is admitted that religion deals in the first instance with the known and natural, then we may well begin to doubt whether the known and natural can suffice for human life. No sooner do we try to think so than pessimism raises its head."

The French philosopher, Théodore Jouffroy, relates his experience in abandoning belief in God. It was like a descent, step by step, into a bottomless pit: "I knew then that at the bottom of myself there was nothing left standing, that all I had believed about myself, about God, and about my destiny in life and in that to come, I now believed no more. This moment was frightful; and when towards morning I threw myself exhausted upon my bed, it seemed to me as if I could feel my former life, so cheerful and complete, die away, and before me there opened up another life, dark and dispeopled, where henceforth I was to live alone, alone with my fatal thought which had just exiled me thither, and which I was tempted to curse." [2]

Current literature abounds in passages in this pessimistic vein. Men confess the hopelessness and despair to which their "fatal thought" has "exiled" them.

It seems most strange that modern biologists, who build on Naturalism, do not apply one of their

[2] See *Christian View of God and the World,* by James Orr, pp. 67ff.

own laws in this connection. Thought is a function of life in its struggle for existence. If thought breeds despair, kills hope, and paralyzes effort, it should be cast aside as unfit for man. The love of life, not the love of extinction and death, is the motive power of human effort. Belief in a life after death is a part of this yearning for life. Destroy it and you rob men of their chief incentive to struggle for high ideals. The truth is that life itself is the court of final appeal. No human system of thought can survive permanently, if life repudiates it. Life has the last word. Life is the supreme critic. Man's religious life is more imperious in its needs than even his physical hunger and thirst. Any little naturalistic system which contracts human religious needs to the narrow limits of a passing form of philosophy, is predestined to be swept away by the ongoing tide of life itself. The organ of man's religious nature has a wide keyboard. The gamut runs up into the heights of the intellectual, and down to the depths of the emotional yearnings of the soul. Any scientific religious theory which tries to evoke the music by cutting out all the octaves but one, will soon be compelled to yield its place to a better player.

I have said that non-Christian Theism is a compromise between Christian Theism and Naturalism. It tends irresistibly to become one or the other. If it makes a real effort to realize the idea of the personality of God and the freedom of man,

it runs immediately into the circle of Christian ideas: repentance, faith, forgiveness, regeneration, salvation, prayer, providence, resurrection, eternal life. If it obeys the naturalistic impulse it sacrifices all of these.

John Burroughs, in his book, *Accepting the Universe,* gives us the result of naturalism consistently wrought out. I give here a few quotations. He writes: "There are no heretics in Nature's church; all are believers, all are communicants. The beauty of natural religion is that you have it all the time; you do not have to seek it afar off in myths and legends, in catacombs, in garbled texts, in miracles of dead saints or wine-bibbing friars."[3]

Again: "How childish to us seems the plan of salvation as our fathers found it in the fervid and, I freely say, inspired utterances of Saint Paul! But it saved them, it built character, it made life serious, it was an heroic creed which has lost credence in our more knowing and more frivolous age."[4]

Speaking of the sun and how each planet might claim its bounty as a special gift to it, he says about God: "It is the same with what we call God. His bounty is of the same universal, impersonal kind, and yet for all practical purposes it exists especially for us, it is immanent every moment in our lives. There is no special Providence."[5]

[3] P. 117. [4] Pp. 117-118. [5] P. 119.

As to the supernatural, he writes:[6] "Though a dreamer and an idealist, I am only truly interested in a natural explanation of things—an explanation that is in harmony with our experiences in this world. The so-called supernatural explanation does not interest me at all. We cannot grasp it and bring it to the test of reason and experience. It is like a bridge with one or more spans missing —only faith can carry us over, and faith that has nothing to stand upon cannot really carry us over. It travels in a circle, and leaves us where it found us."

Referring to man's religious needs, Mr. Burroughs says: "Even great thinkers, like Mr. Balfour, recoil from naturalism and cheerfully embrace supernaturalism. Mr. Balfour finds the key to the fundamental problems of life in the miracle of the Incarnation. He injects into the natural order a theological concept, and the riddle of man's life is solved. To the naturalist, such a conclusion is as impossible as to hope to quench his thirst with the symbols H_2O."[7] Again: "The nature we see about us is enough for all forms of life, except man; why should he flatter himself that his appearance and life demand something extra, some miracle, something mysterious and incomprehensible?"[8]

Mr. Burroughs has little use for the idea of "God." He says: "It is part of the conception of a dual or plural universe, God and Nature.

[6] P. 248. [7] P. 257. [8] P. 258.

This offends my sense of the oneness of creation. It seems to me that there is no other adequate solution of the total problem of life and Nature than what is called 'pantheism,' which identifies mind and matter, finite and Infinite, and sees in all these diverse manifestations one 'absolute being.'" "God is no more the maker than he is the thing made." "There is design in Nature, but not in the sense that there is design in human affairs and contrivances. There is no designer. There are living machines, but no machinists."[9]

The above is the inevitable logic of naturalism. If a man allows the idea of the divine immanence to rule him, there is no escape. If a man's communion has only been with rocks and streams and plants and animals, and air and sky, the sense of fellowship with a divine Person naturally passes away. If the only worship a man knows is to stand in wonder before the beautiful and grand in nature, he will never know the uplifting power of God in the soul. If he has no sense of sin and desire to be saved, he will of course know nothing of what Professor James described as the "lyric joy" of the redeemed life. If one is devoid of moral passion and a deep sense of the tragedy of human transgression, of suffering and spiritual death, it will, of course, be easy to classify good and evil on the same dead level of the outward manifestation of an impersonal world spirit.

Mr. Burroughs writes with a cheery optimism.

[9] Pp. 270-273.

But he seems to overlook the fact that pessimism and despair are quite as legitimate products of his system. Why not? If nature is all that is, and if all that is must be reckoned as the legitimate outcome of nature, then the dirt and filth, and degredation of the slums are as choice a fruit on the tree of life as cleanliness and beauty and holiness, because there is no standard of measurement with which to compare them.

We have a school of writers to-day insisting on the ethical and social improvement of the world on a naturalistic foundation. There is no more incentive to social improvement in Burroughs' doctrine than there is for a piece of driftwood in the current of a river to struggle against the current. The very idea of social improvement loses its meaning, along with the idea of religion.

The whole theory of naturalism is an outrage against human nature. It is a million miles away from the great struggling heart of the world. It can no more take the place of religion than air can take the place of water to slake man's thirst. When the intellect specially trained, provincially walled off from the spiritual life, intent upon seeing but one aspect of reality, utters its naturalistic creed, at once a chorus of voices within the soul shout their undying protest. Intellect, conscience, will, emotions, all man's powers yearning for truth, righteousness and God, cry out against it. Human struggle against sin is not in vain. Conscience is no fiction of the imagination. Life

is not meaningless. Tennyson saw this and expressed it:

"I trust I have not wasted breath;
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with death;

"Not only cunning casts in clay;
Let science prove we are, and then
What matters science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay."

One is constantly surprised at the narrowness of vision, lack of sympathy and spiritual insight, and especially the lack of courage on the part of modern biologists who insist upon a thoroughgoing naturalism. They lay the foundation for a worthy world-view and then repudiate their own premises. They point out how nature has risen from inorganic to organic, from plant to animal, from animal to man. Nature, they insist, generates the vital forces, the instincts and beliefs and powers by which the progress is achieved. They trace the progress up to man with a physical and a psychic life. They recognize his religious tendency, his belief in God and immortality. They note how these desires and beliefs sway him in his conduct. To be consistent one would suppose that they would recognize the supreme fact of human history, the advent of a Redeemer. At a

certain stage Christ comes. After a holy life, in which he tells us who and what God is, he is raised from the dead. Thus he founds a new spiritual kingdom. That kingdom, built on his life and sufferings, and his resurrection, was never so potent a moral and social force as it is to-day. It teaches a future in which man shall forever live in a resurrection life in an eternal and holy kingdom.

Now a consistent logic would see in this supernatural revelation through Christ, the next stage in the upward course of the universe. A well-poised judgment, a judicial attitude of mind, would see the new stage as the necessary outcome of the old. It would not insist on leveling everything down to the stages prior to man. It would insist on bringing things up to the level of Christ. It would have as much courage in the forward as in the backward look.

Instead of this what do we see? We see men like Professor Conklin wiping out the significance of the individual and denying immortality, and confining all the meaning of life to the present, and the gradual improvement of society. This is a complete anti-climax. The biological process raised all kinds of false alarms in man. Conscience was a false alarm. Belief in God and a future life, in religion, in personal and social righteousness reënforced by religion, all these were false alarms. They were organs evolved without environment, without function. They

were meaningless appendages, barnacles clinging to the hull of man's nature. Thus biology repudiates its own principles.

Theoretical theism which refuses to go on to the Christian view is little better. It stakes belief in a personal God and immortality on speculation. Hence it is always open to the attack of counter-speculation. It grounds itself in a refined naturalism. And this gravitates to pantheism. Burroughs gives us the logical outcome. No conception of God can bear the burdens of man's religious needs unless it carries also the idea of a divine and supernatural revelation. Men simply refuse to believe in such a God as never opens his mouth save in natural forms and manifestations. A pantheistic, impersonal God answers such a purpose. It is easier to prove to the mind obsessed with naturalism, and hence easier to propagate. Theism is a higher view but more difficult to maintain unless carried through in revelation and redemption. Current non-Christian theism provides no task for God to perform. The idea of revelation and redemption, the two supreme needs in religion, are ignored by the theorists. And it is at this point that they collide with life. In the struggle for existence life always conquers theory. Thought must conform to the facts of life. The God of current non-Christian theism, who does not reveal himself to man, and who does not redeem, is a lay figure produced by speculative thought. He is like the Egyptian Sphinx. He is

dumb through the long ages of human sin and suffering. If he has eyes they are the eyes of a stone image. They kindle with no active love or pity as they gaze out upon the desert of man's need.

We must build upon a higher, not a lower continuity. A divine will and purpose active in the world is the true continuity. God lifts the natural order to higher and higher stages. He utilizes natural law, but he is not bound by it. When the advance movement demands it, he enters history in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. His will begins to be done in a new way. His kingdom comes with power. The cosmos of the pantheist, for the healthy and prosperous man, may be a pleasant home for a time. But for the suffering and sorrowing and sinning it is a madhouse. The spiritual vision of the Apostle Paul is the supreme need of the philosophers of naturalism. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed unto us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. . . . For creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:18, 19, 21).

CHAPTER VIII

REDUCING CHRISTIANITY: MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Among the modern advocates of a reduced Christ and a reduced Christianity, the plea is constantly made for what is called "a sound metaphysic." The phrase has become hackneyed by frequent use. Some who employ it present one or another of current philosophic world-views. Others are content with the use of the phrase itself. They leave the reader to infer his own "metaphysic" from the religious views expressed. But the idea behind the demand for a "sound metaphysic" in religion is the rejection of all authority. The mind must reason out its own conclusions. Nothing must be imposed as dogma. All must be achieved by mental effort. A "sound metaphysic" is thus assumed as the basis of a sound religious faith, and philosophy enters the scene as the arbiter in all matters of belief.

It is not my purpose to attempt a survey of modern philosophy. But space must be taken for a chapter on the subject. Many religious people are awed by the phrase "a sound metaphysic." And some who use it give the impression that they are in possession of some secret or hidden principle which puts an end to controversy. This

confidence is particularly manifest when they deal with the subject of religion.

For one who is fond of metaphysics there is an intense fascination in the history of modern philosophy. The skill and insight, the capacity for high and sustained thinking, the subtlety and acumen clearly manifest in philosophical controversy, are remarkable. I have in a previous chapter declared in favor of the rights of philosophy. Those rights are unquestionable. The search for a rational explanation of the universe is a fundamental tendency of thinking men. Science traces the connection between physical events. It works with the principle of causality. But it leaves on one side the questions of a first cause and a final cause of the universe.

Religion seeks redemption or harmonious adjustment between man and God. It works with the principle of personality. Philosophy seeks to satisfy the reason in the narrower sense of the word. It works with the principle of rationality.

Now the writer acknowledges great interest in and fondness for the philosophic modes of thought. But I have long since realized that philosophy has limitations which are inherent in its aims and methods, disqualifying it for final pronouncement upon religion. Religion discerns reality and verifies truth in its own way. It also is autonomous and free. It is not the bond-servant of philosophy any more than it is the bond-servant of science. There is an ultimate unity, of course,

binding the three together. But that unity will come not by premature processes of reduction by which one is cancelled in the interest of the others. Science is within its rights in tracing and formulating physical causes. But it has no right to assert that there are no realities except the physical. Philosophy is entirely within its rights in seeking a rational explanation of all things. But it has no right to affirm that the explanation which it thinks it discovers is the only possible explanation. Indeed philosophy constantly refutes its own conclusions by setting them aside for new ones. Religion is within its rights in telling men there is redemption to be found through faith in God. But religion has no right to put a veto upon the scientific search for physical causes, or the philosophic search for a rational principle.

Philosophy is concerned with ultimate problems of many kinds. I name a few of these merely to illustrate the range of thought and the immensity of the task of philosophy. I begin with the problem of mind or consciousness. Is consciousness in men the manifestation of personality? Or is it a passing phase of brain activity which ceases when the brain ceases to function? What is the relation of brain to thought? Again there is the problem of freedom. Is the will free, or is it merely a link in the physical chain? And this gives rise to the question of causality. What is the ultimate meaning of cause? Is it to be expressed in physical or mental terms? Is cause a

relation between forces or a relation between ideas? These questions lead towards the great deeps of philosophic thought. But they leave us, relatively speaking, in the shallows.

One of the fundamental problems of philosophy is the problem of knowledge (epistemology). How and what do we know? Does the external world determine entirely the forms of our knowledge as a stamp leaves its impress on wax? Or does the mind itself determine the form of knowledge, as a cup determines the shape of its contents? Can we know things in themselves, that is, the ultimate reality behind phenomena? Or is our ability limited to a knowledge of phenomena or appearances? Again, when do we know a thing? Do we know it when we have traced the physical connection of events? Or may we know it by the discovery of an ideal relation between events? Do we get the idea of cause and effect from our mental process of ground and inference, or *vice versa?* Is the demand for unity a valid test of knowledge? Can the principle of continuity be made a criterion of truth? Both these ideas are deeply imbedded in current philosophical speculation. But they are by no means unquestioned.

Another fundamental problem is the problem of being (ontology). What is the nature of reality? Is the ultimate form of being matter or mind? Is the universe conscious or unconscious? Is it intelligence or blind impulse? Is it one, or two, or many? Is it, in other words, monistic, dualistic

or pluralistic? All three varieties of philosophic theory are current to-day.

The most fundamental problems of philosophy are those which seek to determine the nature of truth and the nature of Being. In connection with these many special questions are debated. What is the relation between the knowing subject and its known object? Is the relation between Being and our knowledge rational at all points? Is there a remainder with which we have no relation, and which we can never know? Are time and space objective realities, or are they merely human modes of conceiving reality? What relation exists between the idea of time and the idea of cause? Also, what relation exists between the idea of cause and the idea of reason and inference?

Now it is evident that the answers to these various questions, and many others, will turn largely upon whether the philosopher puts emphasis upon the subject or the object of knowledge. The result is that two large groups of philosophic world-views have arisen. The idealistic and spiritualistic world-views find the key to the meaning of the world in man himself as a self-conscious intelligence. Another group finds that key in nature external to man. Thus arise two antagonistic conceptions of the universe, materialism on the one hand, and idealism or personalism on the other. But there are other general philosophic systems which are compromises of these extremes. There are systems like that of Schopen-

hauer, or that of Bergson. The will apart from consciousness, or a vital impulse, is thought of as the deepest of all meanings of reality. Others, despairing of the problem of knowledge, adopt agnosticism as the proper attitude towards the ultimate reality. Yet others insist that the will is a necessary and vital factor in the knowing process, and adopt pragmatism as the true principle and criterion of knowledge. It holds that there is no such thing as "pure thought" apart from will, and that workableness in practical experience must be reckoned with in determining the truth or error of world views.

Again there is the problem of values. At this point ethics and religion come in for consideration. What is the nature of conscience? How does it arise? How far should we accept its conclusions? Does it validate for us the moral ideal and the idea of God? Or is it merely a convenience evolved in man's struggle for life, a device to aid him in gaining his ends?

Similar questions may be asked about religion. Is religion a permanent necessity in man? Will he transcend his need for it? Is it a form of superstition or does it imply an Object which corresponds to man's need? These are a few examples given to suggest the range and difficulty of the problems of philosophy.

What, then, is a "sound metaphysic"? Reply: a sound metaphysic is a world-view based upon valid assumptions and developed by sound princi-

ples of reason. It must not rest upon fanciful or abstract foundations. It must not deduce the universe from a mere mental construction. It must rest on fact. It must be the consistent unfolding of the meaning of the fact. It must be unified and self-consistent and not self-contradictory. It should seek an explanation of all facts.

Professor Hofding borrows from Goethe the word type-phenomenon to designate the fact basis of a philosophic world-view. The type-phenomenon may be taken from anywhere in the realm of fact, from life, from thought, or from matter. It must possess general significance to a sufficient degree to be employed as a principle of comprehension and explanation. It is called a type-phenomenon because it is something we know in experience which may be taken as typical of all else that we do not know.[1]

It is evident that the type-phenomenon will determine the nature of the world-view. If matter is selected as the type, materialism will follow. If thought or the idea is selected as type-phenomenon some form of idealism will result. If the will is chosen, some form of voluntarism ensues. If continuity is made the type-phenomenon, some form of monism will arise. If the philosopher is impressed with the many-ness rather than with the one-ness of things, some form of pluralism will follow. If personality is adopted, some form of personalism or theism is inevitable.

[1] See Hofding: *Problems of Philosophy,* Chap. III.

A world-view will be successful to the degree in which its type-phenomenon solves all problems. The key must unlock all the doors of mystery to be completely successful. All other facts must be capable of reduction to the basal fact or principle of explanation. The cord of rationality must be long enough to tie up all the elements of being in a single bundle. The principle of rationality rules throughout. But it is the reason of the individual philosopher reacting to the facts of the universe. In this way philosophies are the reflections of many personalities. As a very acute writer has said: "Into the choice of the type-phenomenon and into the carrying out of the analogy, a distinct personal element enters. A great philosophical system is a work of art, a drama." Again: "The art will consist in coupling bold creative thought with watchful, critical analysis." One must be able to think "gymnastically" rather than "dogmatically." [2]

The philosopher is free to select his world-view on any level of reality from matter up to man and personality. It is perfectly legitimate, from the standpoint of reason, for a man to attempt to prove that matter is the fundamental reality, and that all else is reducible thereto. It is, of course, quite as legitimate to begin with man and spirit and personality and freedom, and explain all things from this point of view—or indeed from any intermediate point between matter and man.

[2] See Hofding: *Problems of Philosophy,* pp. 127-8.

I am not here speaking of the cogency of the logic of the respective views, but only of the intellectual rights involved. The rights of reason cannot be gainsaid.

Some of the discussions of current philosophical problems require a considerable degree of intelligence to understand them. A very high degree of intellectual subtlety is manifested by expert philosophers. This is seen, for example, in the idealistic reduction of the forms of matter to forms of mind. To the ordinary layman this sometimes seems to be absurd. To others, more appreciative of the refinements of reason, it seems to possess great probability. Another aspect of the same effort is the striving to find a monistic basis for the universe. The transition from mind to matter can only be made by a highly speculative mode of thought. Some modern philosophers are stubbornly skeptical on the subject. They remain dualists or pluralists. So also as to freedom and determinism, the thinkers do not agree. One group selects continuity as it appears in nature, as type-phenomenon, and denies freedom. The other selects freedom, as we know it in our self-conscious personal life, and affirms it as a key to the meaning of the world. There is also the problem of evil. Some make it a finite phase of an infinite life, a stage in the evolution of the Absolute. In due time it will cease to be. Others, like Professor William James and Mr. H. G. Wells, realizing the terrible reality of sin and the mys-

tery of its existence, coupled with the dire possibility of its permanence, affirm a finite God who with man is struggling against it.

The chief point here is that the great number of metaphysical systems indicates the variety in the perfectly legitimate forms of rationality. Philosophy, planting its feet firmly on scientific fact, or some fact of experience, moves out to the frontiers. By speculative thought it seeks to solve the ultimate problems. As a result of this effort there are now in existence a dozen or more world-views.

We recur to our question: which of these many world-views answers to the requirements of a "sound metaphysic"? Each philosopher undoubtedly would claim that his own system does so; and if we are sound in our definition of philosophy, every one of them would be right. Each begins with a valid assumption or type-phenomenon. Each pursues legitimate method in constructing his system. Each world-view is unified and coherent, and attempts to explain all phases of being. No one of these contradictory systems can be read out of court on the ground that it is not "a sound metaphysic." It follows, therefore, that the phrase is meaningless when employed to discredit the evangelical Christian faith. That faith gives rise to its own metaphysic which bears perfectly valid credentials in the intellectual and philosophic realm. It is one of a dozen or more systems, all of which, of course, are not

equally true, but which are equally "sound" as metaphysical efforts to explain the world.

Here it is necessary to enter a caution against confusion of thought. Christianity is primarily not a philosophy of the universe. It is a religion. It is not founded upon metaphysics. Like all things known to us, there is an implied philosophy. There is a certain view of God and nature and man and the world in the background of our faith. But Christianity is a historical religion, and a religion of experience. It is grounded in facts. Its credentials are well-established facts and clearly defined experiences. God has revealed himself to man in and through Jesus Christ. The Christian world-view rests upon these facts. The controversy of Christianity is not with philosophy as a mode of rational thinking. The controversy is about facts. Christianity has no controversy with any who are open to evidence as to facts. If a man begins the study of the New Testament with a preconception as to what kind of facts may and may not be established by evidence, he forfeits the right of the claim to the scientific spirit. Christianity asks only that men be open to evidence when they examine its credentials.

The question now arises: Can philosophy prescribe to religion? Must man's religious life wait upon philosophy for its vindication before it can make any claims? Is Christianity dependent upon "a sound metaphysic" in the ordinary popular meaning of that phrase? The reply is a decided

negative. And the reasons are most conclusive. It can almost be said that the more successful a world-view is as a metaphysical system, the less likely it is to be suitable as a religion. But it would be an exaggeration to state the case in this way. It may be said, with truth, however, that a man may philosophize in a thoroughgoing manner without coming anywhere near being religious. Indeed the rational process in metaphysics is often in open antagonism to religion. The reasons why philosophers cannot prescribe to religion may be summed up in the following points.

First of all the philosophic and religious interests and methods and functions are different. Philosophy works with the principle of rationality; religion with personality. In philosophy a man is trying to find out how the world is made, by the exercise of the reason. In religion a man is trying to find God, and forgiveness for sin and redemption, and a perfectly moral character in himself and in society. A quest for religious satisfaction is certainly not identical with the quest for a philosophical world-view. The thoughtful religious man knows there is a deep reasonableness beneath the religious life. But this is not the same as the narrower rationality of the philosophic quest. In seeking to satisfy this rational element only, therefore, philosophy cannot meet the needs of religion.

In the second place the philosophic mode of

thought is beyond the capacity of men generally. Its technique is outside of the common knowledge. Much of its language is a foreign tongue to the non-expert. Its issues find no direct point of contact with the human interests of men. Being inconclusive, and inherently unstable in results, it affords no program for the serious work of life. Such a program is an absolute necessity for common sense and for religion. So, also, the injunction to repudiate all authority in religion in the interest of reason, falls on unresponsive ears when the Babel of philosophic voices is offered as a substitute. "Reject your New Testament and your Christ as authorities, and listen to the clear voice of reason," is the oft-repeated admonition of the "modern man" to the Christian. The Christian listens, and what he hears is not the clear voice of reason, but twelve or fourteen voices, all speaking at the same time in contradictory terms. And each of these voices validates its right to be heard on the ground that it is the outcome of "a sound metaphysic." Thus philosophy is inadequate for religion because it is interested in partial insights while recognizing the various insights as equally valid. Each of these partial insights is developed into an independent system combating all others. System after system is evolved out of all the preceding systems. Take a single example: Professor Royce reviews Schopenhauer's doctrine of the unconscious will, with its despairing restlessness, and unsatisfied

desire, ending in tragedy and pessimism. Then he points out that Hegel, beginning at the same point, analyzed consciousness in an opposite way. What we desire, according to Hegel, is to be more perfect personalities than we are. We are parts of the "Absolute," and "Hegel's Absolute . . . is dissatisfied everywhere *in* his finite world, but is triumphantly content *with* the whole of it, just because his wealth is complete."[3] Thus Hegel distilled optimism out of the same material that yielded only pessimism to Schopenhauer. Professor Royce himself tolerates both the pessimism and the optimism. "What people fail to comprehend," he says, "concerning these deep and partial insights, which are so characteristic of great philosophers, is that the proper way to treat them is neither to scorn nor to bow down, but to experience and then to get our freedom in presence of all such insights, even by the very wealth of our experience."[4] His own system, like the other idealisms, is monistic, and ends with an optimism which makes the universe perfectly safe in spite of the most tragic and terrible aspects of human life. If we could stop here, all would be well. But philosophy is always pursued by its nemesis. Professor James is a pluralist and argues against the above view. He reckons with facts as they are, sin, suffering, sorrow, pain. These must not be waved to one side by any magical wand of ideal-

[3] *Spirit of Modern Philosophy,* p. 260.
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 262.

istic theory. Let the universe be as terrible as it seems to be, with its conflicts and defeats. His attack on the absolute systems is terrific. He has no use for the Absolute of his opponents. But his God, while much resembling the God of Christian theism, is also a finite struggler against his enemies, and the outcome is not necessarily assured in advance.

The preceding reminds us of Hofding's remark that in philosophy we must think "gymnastically" rather than "dogmatically." It is a process of trying out the many conceivable views of the universe. Thus the word "critical" has become quite popular as descriptive of world-views. We have critical monism, and critical dualism, and critical realism, and so on. They are "critical" because their authors hold them as tentative and subject to change. This is characteristic of our rational processes in philosophy. The problems are not those of religion, as when a man hungers for God. They are problems for thought working in the interest of unity and self-consistency. As some one has said a painted paste-board apple, filled with sawdust, is just as interesting a problem for thought as a real apple. But from the point of view of a hungry child's appetite, it is not interesting at all. The two hungers are not the same. They may, and often do, exist entirely apart.

I might continue indefinitely to illustrate the ways of philosophers. But it is unnecessary. It

is clear from what has been said that philosophy depends upon very subtle and refined mental processes; that the systems often contradict each other; and that they are inherently in a state of unstable equilibrium. The ideas of God and religion undergo many and varied transformations in the current philosophic systems. In Spinoza's pantheism, God is the one impersonal substance with the two attributes of extension and thought. With Schopenhauer, he is unconscious will. With William James and other pluralists, he is a finite struggler, although a real personal Being. In Hofding's critical monism, he is a "value" with a somewhat indefinite meaning. In Professor Bowne's *Personalism,* God's personality is vindicated and justified on the basis of an ultimate monistic conception of the nature of being. With Bergson, God seems to be regarded as a vital impulse, although the idea has never been fully developed by its author. With Professor Beckwith, as we have seen, God is a potential something in nature out of which all things unfold, but without personal traits.

The idea of religion varies in a corresponding way. Religion is a device evolved in man's struggle for existence, to be transcended in due time. Or it is the recognition of a Force or Power greater than ourselves in the universe. With others it is a disciplinary process of the finite individual in the struggle with evil through which the Absolute Being gradually realizes himself.

In Christian theism religion is the worship of God as an infinite spiritual personal Being who has revealed himself to man in redeeming love through Christ, who cares for men as individuals and in society, to whom we can pray and in whom we can trust. The idea of immortality suffers the same uncertain fate. In a few current systems an effort is made to retain it. In many others it becomes not survival after death, but continued influence in this life. It is declared to be unnecessary. Many arguments are employed to refute the idea. They are based usually upon a monistic type of world-view. And this, in turn, grows directly or indirectly out of physical continuity as employed in science.

The strength of a philosophic system is in its type-phenomenon or fundamental assumption, rather than its argumentation to prove it. The proofs, as a rule, are simply ingenious mental constructions. They are interpretations of the various facts of the world in terms of the type-phenomenon. Each system is impregnable from the point of view of its major assumption. But its weakness consists in the same thing. Every system is weak in the presence of any other with a more acceptable, or more probable major assumption. For the Christian thinker Christian theism is by far the most reasonable view. Its assumption is man, personality and freedom. It accepts the religious experience of man as mediated through Christ as a fact based upon sufficient evi-

dence. Arguments for this view, such as those of Balfour and Hudson, which I have already discussed, seem entirely conclusive. But viewed as rational systems, they must take their chance with all the others. In the arena of philosophic conflict there is no prospect of peace.

Professor Pratt, answering the plea that "the people" must be educated up to Philosophy, so they will accept it as a rule of life, says: "But what, after all, is Philosophy? Does it mean Hegel or Hume, Thomas Aquinas or Thomas Huxley?" Again, he says: "In short, real and undeniable progress has been made in Philosophy as in most things else. Yet if it come to a question of definite results, of problems surely solved and perplexing questions forever laid to rest, one must feel indeed somewhat chagrined. . . . How much further along are we, one may well ask, towards really settling the problems and coming to any definite and thoroughly satisfactory conclusions, than the Greeks were? The tendency towards skepticism is just about as strong as in the days of the Sophists; but no stronger. Neither the theists nor the atheists have been able to prove their point to the satisfaction of the other. Idealism and Realism are still having it out. We are about as far from knowing what Reality is as we ever were." [5]

There is a tendency to-day to two types of world-view. One builds on the demands of physi-

[5] *Psychology of Religious Belief*, pp. 289-290.

cal science and the law of continuity. Man, freedom, religion, God, immortality, are so interpreted as to preserve continuity. The other type builds on man and his entire life, including religion. It seeks to do justice to all the facts: freedom and personality as facts of consciousness; God as a fact of experience in redemption from sin; religion as an inner life with God and a fact of universal significance. This type of opinion inevitably becomes friendly with Christianity, because Christianity recognizes the genuineness and validity of all the above necessary ideas. It completes them by teaching a genuine revelation of God in the supernatural life of Jesus Christ and his resurrection from the dead. The opposing systems retain the idea of religion in some vague sense. But when they get through with religion, and in particular the Christian religion, it is at the point of extinction. They do with it what certain wasps do with caterpillars, in providing living food for their young. They skillfully sting the caterpillar, and paralyze the motor nerve centers. Thus they keep it alive as food, and destroy its ability to run away. The larvæ then devour the helpless victim at their leisure. In religion the law of continuity is the sting. Applied in the personal and spiritual sphere, it paralyzes the nerve centers of religion. Those centers, freedom, personality, God, immortality, lose their meaning. Then comes the end of religion. Thus scientific or philosophic absolutism, not genuine

science, is converting, or attempting to convert, Christianity into food to satisfy its voracious but abnormal appetite.

And this brings us to the crucial point. Religion cannot wait upon philosophy, because philosophy cannot supply a stable basis for religion. Every great religious verity is constantly called in question in philosophic thought. An adequate view of the soul is set forth strongly supported by rational arguments. But at once it is attacked and apparently destroyed by some other system. A clear demonstration of a personal God is set forth. But at once on some other assumption it is questioned and the clouds of uncertainty gather about the idea. We prove by philosophic reasoning the immortality of the soul. Before our ink dries on the page we hear the cynical reply of some "modern" man who asks: "Who are you to imagine that your survival after death is of any importance to the universe?" And not only so, he proceeds to construct a philosophic or speculative disproof of immortality which seems to many to be based upon a metaphysic just as "sound" as any other.

I am not implying in all this any question as to the rights of philosophy. Let men strive for as many insights as they will. Let the systems evolve into as many varieties as may be. Let the antagonisms and contradictions become as sharp and decisive as temperament and assumption and speculative acumen may necessitate. In it all

something is going on distinct from religion. The process is one which religion cannot employ save in a secondary way. This is not because religion is against reason but because it broadens reason into something richer and more conformable to human need than is the case with philosophy.

God has revealed himself to man through Christ. The facts of the record are given in the New Testament. In our experience of redemption through Christ we find the full realization of our religious need. We had been struggling for power to overcome sin. We longed for righteousness. We yearned for power to improve society. We were filled with a social passion. We desired to remake the world into the kingdom of God. When we gave fair consideration to the evidence we found it true. We accepted Christ and all the above needs were met. He planted in us the seeds of self-conquest and of social righteousness. He created the spiritual visions and imparted the moral and spiritual inspirations we needed. He proved to be the power of God unto salvation to all who accepted him as Saviour and Lord.

Now it was this experience of God in Christ that taught us the difference between man's rational reaction to external facts as in philosophy, and man's spiritual reaction to a holy and loving and personal God in the soul as in Christianity. In this way Christianity has fulfilled the ideal of religion and has forever set religion free. It stands on its own foundations, brings its own cre-

dentials, performs its own function. That function is not duplicated by philosophy or science, or art, or any other form of human culture. The impracticable dreamers of mankind are not Christian thinkers and workers who are using this tremendous spiritual force for remaking the world in a thousand missionary and social and philanthropic movements. The dreamers and visionaries are those who are blind to so palpable a fact as Christianity and who imagine they can overthrow it by imposing fabrics of speculative thought.

Since Christ began his creative work in the world, religion is forever imbedded in history. The plea that the eternal and universal truths of reason and religion are not dependent upon history cannot be made good. Christianity completes religion as an ideal, as an experience and as a program. To go behind Christ and his gospel by referring them to speculative philosophy, is to go backward and not forward. To do so is to put all the supreme problems in incompetent hands. As we have seen no one of those problems is settled by modern philosophy. The philosophic battlefield is very interesting. The conflicting armies gain their chief joy from the conflict itself and not from any definite conclusions or terms of peace. But while these battles are raging in academic circles, Christianity, filled with a deep consciousness of human sin and sorrow and need, armed with a gospel which is the power of God

unto salvation, and inspired with the great vision of individual and social righteousness, goes on its great way, blessing the world. We must next look at this religion in the framework of its own historical origin, and apply to it the recognized canons of historical research.

CHAPTER IX

REDUCING CHRISTIANITY: HISTORICAL CRITICISM

In previous chapters I have pointed out how science and philosophy have attempted to reduce Christianity. Both attempts have failed. They have failed because they have ignored facts. No scientific undertaking can even get well started, much less come to a fruitful conclusion, if it begins by refusing to recognize facts. Philosophy is under the same law. It is bound to build on a foundation of fact.

The strength of Christianity is that it is imbedded in history. It is primarily a religion of facts. The facts of experience and life confirm the facts of history. But as a religion it stands or falls by its facts. If these are unstable the whole structure is unstable. Doctrinal systems of various kinds have arisen as interpretations of the facts. These, of course, cannot all be equally true. But the facts on which these systems attempt to build contain the vital issues for modern controversy. This is not a book of doctrine. It is concerned with the facts from which all Christian doctrines arise.

The literature of the New Testament, of course,

is the source book of our knowledge of the facts on which our religion is founded. It is to these sources that we make our appeal. But the appeal is not to any authority. It is an appeal to evidence. We find our authority for our religious life in the Christ of the New Testament, when we accept him as Saviour and Lord. But for this argument the issue concerns facts and the evidence in support of them. I ask nothing on the part of the reader except an open mind and a sense of fairness in considering the issue as a whole.

One of the favorite modern methods of reducing Christ and Christianity is historical criticism. In very simple terms this method may be expressed thus: To attempt by careful and unbiased research to ascertain the historical facts of which the New Testament purports to be the record. These facts pertain to the authorship, date, original contents and historical authenticity and reliability of the various books. No defender or opponent of Christianity, who sincerely seeks truth, can possibly object to this method of dealing with the original documents of the Christian religion.

How then shall we ascertain the facts? There is much controversy over the alleged facts of the New Testament records. I mention some of the ways or methods employed to determine the historical contents of the New Testament.

I mention first the way of selecting a particular element in the New Testament teachings as the basis of a theory and ignoring all the rest. At least three groups of teaching have been used in this way: the supernatural teachings, construed in a particular way, those known as eschatological, and the ethical teachings of Jesus. Each of these groups has been made determinative in explaining all the others, and corresponding theories have been set forth. I shall mention these theories later. At this point I dwell a moment only upon the last, and that is the way of appealing to the moral and spiritual axioms in the teachings of Jesus. The view is that these self-evident moral and spiritual truths need no proof. Beside these all else in the New Testament is uncertain. So we are told. Dr. Martineau vigorously maintains this view, and protests against any other test of New Testament teaching. He says: "The tests by which we distinguish the fictitious from the real, the wrong from the right, the unlovely from the beautiful, the profane from the sacred, are to be found within and not without, in the methods of just thought, the instincts of pure conscience and the aspirations of unclouded reason."[1] With this simple and comprehensive principle Dr. Martineau has no difficulty in distinguishing the true from the false in the pages of the New Testament. He rejects the

[1] *Seat of Authority in Religion,* p. 297.

miraculous, the Messianic, the apocalyptic teachings as lying outside the circle of moral and spiritual intuitions.[2]

There are innumerable objections to this theory which there is not time or space to develop in detail. I have discussed it at length in my book entitled *Freedom and Authority in Religion.* There is one fatal objection, however, which I will mention. The view simply sets aside the history and transfers the problem of Christianity to the inner realm of our moral and spiritual intuitions. Unsupported by history these must seek a philosophic world-view to sustain them. The moment this is done the moral and spiritual intuitions become part of a speculative system, which is denied by other speculative systems. There are numerous world-views which deny the permanent validity of any of our so-called moral intuitions in the sense in which Dr. Martineau employs the word. It is not necessary to refer to so extreme an example as Nietzsche, who affirmed that the moral teachings of Jesus are a curse to the race. We only need to think of the large group of thinkers who hold to Naturalism or Agnosticism. The moral intuition theory has to fight for its life the moment it repudiates the New Testament history and transfers the problem to the inner realm of human consciousness.

[2] Compare pages 26, 30, 79, 93, 96 in my *Freedom and Authority in Religion.*

The unstable equilibrium of speculative thought reappears at once. In his search for God man again enters a blind alley, leading nowhere.

Secondly, there is the way of re-defining history. According to Loofs, a supernatural event lies outside the methods of historical research. He says: "When we cannot find any cause which, according to our experience, is possible, then every conscientious historian is prevented from speaking of a historical fact. Hence, when historians are forced by credible reports to recognize a fact as having really occurred, they must assume causes lying within the sphere of our experience."[3] But if historians conclude that such explanations or causes are impossible (*e.g.*, as to the resurrection of Christ), then they will have to say: "Here historical knowledge and the possibility of scientific historical perception cease; for the historian does not come to a satisfactory solution of this question, nor can he do so; here he comes into touch with the sphere of religious belief."[4]

Professor James Moffatt, in his recent volume, *The Approach to the New Testament,* takes a similar view. He writes: "The last word about New Testament problems like the consciousness of Jesus, or any of the so-called 'supernatural' phenomena, does not lie with the historical method. We scrutinize and sift, for example, the

[3] Loofs: *The Truth About Jesus Christ,* p. 83.
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 84.

evidence for traditions like the 'virgin-birth,' the so-called 'miraculous stories,' and the resurrection of Jesus. Literary and historical criticism analyzes the data by the ordinary methods of research. Yet the conclusion seems to be that in the end these can neither be proved nor disproved by historical investigation; the ultimate decision lies with faith, or, if you like, with dogma, at any rate with some factor which is introduced into the discussion." [5]

Both these writers are wide apart from the older "orthodoxy." They are more nearly in line with the newer "orthodoxy" which has arisen out of modern historical research. It is surely interesting to observe the restraint and modesty of these men in their efforts to define the limits of the historical method. They explicitly repudiate the right of the critical scholar to indulge in dogmatic negations about the supernatural elements in the New Testament. There is too much evidence to be set aside thus, and they recognize it.

As I see it, the view of these critics as to the relation of historical science to supernatural facts, is incorrect. If it is meant that we do not fully understand supernatural causes I raise no objection. We do not fully understand any causes, natural or supernatural. In so far as a man's attitude will influence his interpretation of the historical data, I raise no question. We all bring a subjective element to bear upon facts.

[5] *Approach to the New Testament,* p. 203.

But to affirm that a supernatural event, like the resurrection of Jesus, lies outside the realm of historical research, is to rob history of its most vital factor. The historical actuality of Christ's resurrection was the burden of Paul's Gospel; the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians is his great argument to prove it. There is nothing extraordinary in the evidence for the resurrection of Christ. It is easy to prove that a man died. It is easy to prove that a man was alive at a certain time. Such proof is of daily occurrence. The extraordinary thing in the present instance is not the evidence, but the fact itself. It was the same man who died and was alive again afterwards. The resurrection of Christ, as belief, or as fact, was the cause of the Christian movement. This is admitted by practically all schools of thought. Thus we come to the absurd conclusion that the Christian movement in history, the most momentous of all movements, arose out of something which lies outside the range of historical research.

Again, historical evidence "proves," for criticism, other facts of the New Testament, no better attested than the supernatural facts. Besides this, if an event really supernatural cannot be historically proved, since a supernatural cause lies outside causes known to us, how can any really new thing ever be proved historically? The evolution hypothesis tries to stick to the known factors, but it is always coming to new

levels, higher than the preceding. How can there be any progress unless we allow room for the new to appear?

We must not prejudge God's capacity to enter history in new ways. Whether we believe that he does so or not, depends upon the evidence. Our conclusion is that facts of any and all kinds in the realm of history are to be accepted if the evidence is sufficient. The nature of the fact in question may have a bearing upon the amount of evidence required. But we cannot justly rule out any class of facts from history because they are extraordinary in themselves.

The third way of handling the New Testament materials is what has been known in the history of thought as *a priorism*. This is the outgrown method of medieval times. It starts with some abstract principle and deduces conclusions therefrom. The modern scientific way is to approach the material for research without prejudgment, and with an open mind. One of the most curious of recent phases of "modernist" theories of the New Testament is the return to *a priorism*. The question of fact as to the supernatural is determined in advance. No amount of evidence, for example, can establish the fact of the resurrection of Christ. This is because such a fact is ruled out before the investigation begins.

There is little need here to refute this method. Mere statement of it refutes it to the mind which loves truth. The scientific spirit and attitude

may be confidently trusted to correct it. Genuinely earnest scholars, like Professors Moffatt and Loofs, whom I have just quoted, are already trying out ways of escape from the *a priorism* of this method. Such an approach to the New Testament simply cannot live in the atmosphere of modern scientific candor and openness of mind.

A fourth way adopts the agnostic attitude. We are told that the problem of finding the truth about Jesus Christ and the origins of our faith, is a hopeless one. As a result many abandon Christianity for some system of speculative philosophy. Filled with the modern desire to be rid of all authority, even that of Jesus Christ, and persuading themselves that they cannot learn the truth from the New Testament documents, these men would lead the world out into the mists of speculative philosophy. We have already seen how inadequate is this method for religion. When you start with the rationalistic principle, you are at the parting of the ways. From that point roads radiate in all directions, North, South, East and West. Religiously a man may find himself at last in the frozen polar regions, instead of amid the luxuriance of the tropics. In a word, religion must find another way to reality. Rationalism leads him to no one goal, except perhaps to the frontiers of thought where negation is all that is left. Beginning with agnosticism as to Christ a man ends thus with agnosticism as to all else.

The reader has probably foreseen my conclusion. It is that the true method of approach to the New Testament is that of a sound historical criticism, combined with spiritual appreciation of its contents. No Christian can hope or demand that the source book of his religion shall be spared the most rigid investigation. If the New Testament cannot endure any light of modern historical research, it cannot permanently retain its influence. It is precisely because I am convinced that it can stand any test that I am writing this chapter. Christianity lives on reality, not fables. We want no shams. Jesus hated them, and his followers should imitate him. Loyalty to fact is the criterion here as everywhere in human thought and life. It is the very breath of life to science. It is equally so to Christianity. It is thus the common standing-ground of all our culture.

These statements will not be disputed by any man of serious mind. Nor will the following implications of the method be questioned:

First—The method of approach must be open-minded to all kinds of evidence.

Second—No relevant question can be foreclosed in advance.

Third—Any conclusion justified by the evidence must be frankly admitted.

Fourth—The method must employ only legitimate canons of historical research. Conclusions must be based on facts and valid criteria of truth.

Fifth—It must recognize the differences between researches in physical nature and in history.

The above are axiomatic principles. Yet they are often forgotten. Professor Moffat, in the volume already mentioned, gives an admirable statement of the fundamentals, although I think he lacks consistency in some applications of his principles. Insisting on the rights of the historical method, which must be maintained, he refers to two "encroaching theories." "One is that the function of historical research is to provide evidence for foregone dogmatic conclusions. This would mean the very death of the historical spirit in the study of the New Testament."[6] I am in hearty agreement here. I hold distinct views as to the doctrinal meaning of the facts. But in these pages I am dealing with the historical facts, not the doctrines.

Another encroaching theory to be resisted, he describes as follows: "Meantime, we observe that the other foe is the *a priori* abstract method which develops an idea of Christianity out of special considerations, till it really matters little or nothing what has happened in history."[7] One of these special considerations to be resisted is the so-called "inner light." Mysticism has its place, of course, argues Dr. Moffatt. But it must not set aside history. Another special consideration

[6] *Approach to the New Testament,* p. 143.
[7] *Ibid.,* p. 144.

to be rejected is "to retain some isolated ideas of the New Testament and at the same time to ignore this context." For example he quotes Dumas' words about the command to "love one another," when he declared that he did not care "whether they were spoken by God or man." "But," says Professor Moffatt, "it does matter who spoke words like these, and why." Then he adds in reference to the saying that "its driving power lies in the original context, which deduces it from the love of God to man as exhibited in the vocation of Jesus Christ." [8]

Again he quotes Strauss, as follows: "The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts." Dr. Moffatt at once adds the comment: "This sort of language amazes us. But it was quite sincere from Strauss." It is based upon the abstract Hegelian philosophy. "Such a position is at best a make-shift," says Dr. Moffatt; "neither historical science nor faith can accept it as a final position." Again he says: "We may be sure that it is doubtful praise of the New Testament as an epitome of superb principles which happens to be encrusted with historical legends."

This "historical agnosticism" based on a general world-view is untenable. Dr. Moffatt says: "But this despairing view of historical research

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-8.

is no longer necessary. The mood voiced by Mérimée and others including modernists who tend to regard religious interpretation as independent of facts, is merely a temporary estimate, induced by historical agnosticism. It is scientifically untenable." Again: "Faith will never allow that the Christian values are charged with a vital significance which is absolutely independent of facts, and the historical method is equally resolute to maintain that its skeptical element does not affect the conviction that from the first the Christian interpretation of faith was organically connected with some nexus of events."[9]

There is much more in harmony with the preceding in the discussion of Professor Moffatt. The gist of it all is that the New Testament contains real history, and that efforts to evaporate the history in philosophic theories, mystical interpretations, studies in comparative religion, or psychological speculations, have no scientific standing and must be abandoned. Dr. Moffatt is grinding no ax for orthodoxy. He is speaking as a scientific student. But his position impales and destroys a host of "modernist" theories. It is like the ramrod which the cartoonist represented the hunter as using to load his gun. He waited until the birds were in a row, and by firing the ramrod through them he killed the whole flock at once. It is to be surmised that if Dr. Moffatt's

[9] *Approach to the New Testament,* pp. 148ff.

self-evidently sound conception of the fact basis of Christianity is taken seriously, it will destroy a great modern industry in which theories are manufactured which solve all the historical problems of the New Testament in a beautiful way, by the simple process of eliminating the history. But it will be a real gain when scholarship abandons fable for fact in this great realm of research. Of one thing I feel we may be assured. The application of artificial or *a priori* theories to the New Testament in which the facts are prejudged is in irrepressible conflict with the love of reality and loyalty to fact which is so marked a characteristic of the scientific spirit. That spirit will ultimately win against all such theories. And so far as this particular controversy is concerned, Christians can ask for no more.

The Present Status of Critical Theories

The next step will be to glance at the present status of critical theories of the New Testament. These are well known among students of the subject. Hence it is not necessary for me to give more than a bare outline. I have already discussed the subject at greater length than is possible here, in my book *Freedom and Authority in Religion.*[10] I must therefore refer the reader to

[10] *Freedom and Authority in Religion,* pp. 64-113. Griffith and Rowland Press, Philadelphia.

that work for a more nearly complete statement of the case. I refer also to Chapter X in my *Why Is Christianity True?* for an account of the relation of the Apostle Paul and his writings to the Synoptic Gospels.[11]

The salient points of the critical views as to authorship and date of the Synoptic Gospels and the four great Pauline Epistles may be briefly given as follows:

First, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written about the years 60 to 70 of our era.

Second, the Gospel of Mark is the oldest of the three and was probably written by Mark under the influence of the Apostle Peter.

Third, Matthew and Luke drew a part of their materials from a common source, known in critical circles as Q.

Fourth, this Source Q which yielded a part of the material for Matthew and Luke may have been as old or older than Mark.

Fifth, the four Epistles, Romans, First and Second Corinthians and Galatians, are accepted with practical unanimity by all schools of criticism as the genuine writings of the Apostle Paul.

Sixth, these four Epistles of Paul are the oldest documents of the New Testament. They were written before the Gospel of Mark, and it may be earlier than the common source employed by Matthew and Luke.

[11] *Why Is Christianity True?* Griffith and Rowland Press, Philadelphia.

It is not necessary for the present purpose that the remaining New Testament books be considered. The controverted points turn chiefly upon the Synoptic Gospels and the four great Pauline Epistles. It is in these writings, if anywhere, we come into contact with the historical origins of the Christian religion.

If now we ask what these writings teach concerning the Person of Jesus Christ and the origin of the Christian religion, we obtain the following answer:

Going back to the oldest literature, Paul's Epistles, just referred to, we find various important facts. One is that Paul claimed to be an Apostle directly appointed by Christ (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:11, 12; I Cor. 9:1; Romans 15:19). So also there is fundamental agreement between Paul and Jesus regarding the Fatherhood of God, the doctrine of Love, of Repentance and Faith; of the Kingdom of God; of the Church. Paul's ethics are quite in harmony with the Sermon on the Mount.[12]

So also Paul teaches the sinlessness of Christ; his divine origin; his preëxistence before entering the world; his relation to the human race as the new Adam; his equality with the Father; his resurrection from the dead after having been crucified as atoning Redeemer of the world; his

[12] Compare Mullins: *Why is Christianity True?* Pp. 140-144.

Second Coming and his position as final Judge of mankind.[13]

Of special importance in this connection is the fact that the resurrection of Christ, along with his atoning death, is central in Paul's thought. The fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians gives an argument of overwhelming force for the fact of the resurrection. And Paul thought of his Gospel and his career as built upon a rotten foundation without the resurrection of Christ from the dead.[14]

Compare next the contents of that common source of Matthew and Luke, to which reference has been made. Here again I must refer for details to the second chapter in my *Freedom and Authority in Religion.* The document, common to Matthew and Luke, contains all the elements of Messianic and supernatural teachings found in the other parts of these Gospels. I mention a few. The sayings of Jesus about himself assume a divine dignity. He speaks with final authority as in the Sermon on the Mount. Men who are persecuted "for my sake" are blessed (Matt. 5:11). He is called Lord at the final judgment (Matt. 7:21, 24, 27). He is the Founder of the Kingdom of God. Men are to forsake the

[13] For detailed proof of these points, which, however, will scarcely be questioned, see Mullins, *Why Is Christianity True?* Pp. 142-150.

[14] *Ibid.,* Chapter XIII, gives full statement of the argument for the resurrection of Christ.

dearest possessions and break the closest human ties for his sake (Matt. 10:34; Luke 12:51 ff). Religious duty is summed up in taking up the cross and following him (Matt. 10:38; Luke 9:23). He will confess before the angels those who confess him before men (Matt. 10:32 and Luke 12:8). One notable saying worthy of emphasis is the word of Jesus: "Blessed is he whosoever shall find no cause of stumbling in me." This certainly places Jesus at the center of religion. Dr. Denny says of it: "Taking this simple sentence in its simplicity, we do not hesitate to say of it, as of Matthew 10:32, that there is nothing in the Fourth Gospel which transcends it."[15]

If any doubt could remain on the point whether Jesus meant to offer himself as the Object of faith, one notable passage in the common sections of Matthew and Luke would settle it. He says: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." In this connection are the words of invitation, "Come unto me, &c." (Matt. 11:25-27 and Luke 10:21-22).

There are no just critical or historical or scientific grounds for rejecting this preceding passage. But the critics do not hesitate to reject it without such grounds. Dr. Martineau finds an easy solu-

[15] Denny, *Jesus and the Gospel*, pp. 231-232.

tion. He says that the thanksgiving prayer preceding these words is quite in harmony with the known character of Jesus. Hence they are genuine. But the claim to a unique knowledge of God and an exceptional relation to him is not in harmony with his known character, and hence it must be rejected. This is a fair sample of the current conclusions where writers depart from the critical and historical method. Professor Harnack also finds no critical grounds for rejecting the passage. He rejects it, nevertheless, because it sounds too much like some of the teachings of the Fourth Gospel.[16] In this way the evidence is discredited in advance. In this way *a priorism* runs away from historical and critical science, and, I may add, in this way the solidity of the historical foundations of the gospel becomes increasingly manifest. The corrective to the current evasions and dextrous efforts to discredit the Gospels is the scientific historical spirit itself. Nothing can be more hopeless in our age of enlightenment than the effort to smuggle abstract philosophic principles of explanation into problems of literary and historical criticism, as a makeshift in the absence of historical and critical evidence for the positions held. This is more particularly true where the evidence all points the other way.

The document Q abounds in Messianic pas-

[16] See Martineau: *Seat of Authority in Religion,* pp. 582-585, and Harnack, *Sayings of Jesus,* p. 302.

sages which I have elsewhere discussed.[17] Our oldest Gospel, Mark, is preëminently the Gospel in which the mighty works of Jesus are set forth. It is saturated, through and through, with the supernatural elements.[18] I mention a few passages only. Mark records the baptism of Jesus, the opened heavens and approving voice of the Father (1:9; 12); the healing of the paralytic and forgiveness of sins and reply to the charge of blasphemy (2:6-12); the proclamation of himself as Lord of the Sabbath (2:28); the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead (5:35f); the confession of Peter and the Messianic teachings, including prophecy of the death and resurrection of Jesus (8:27ff); parable of the King's Son (12:1); triumphal entry (11:8ff); the saying about the shedding of his blood "for many" (14:22f); the resurrection and appearances to various groups and the giving of the Great Commission (16:1-20).

The reader will, of course, understand that in omitting other parts of Matthew and Luke and the Gospel of John and the remaining Epistles of Paul, and the other New Testament books, I am not rejecting them, nor evading any issues about them. I am simply seeking the ultimate bases for the historical facts of our religion. The book of Acts is of immense significance. So also is the Gospel of John. But for our immediate

[17] *Freedom and Authority in Religion,* pp. 86ff.
[18] *Ibid.,* pp. 90ff.

purpose the view is confined to the common source behind Matthew and Luke, along with the Gospel of Mark and the four epistles of Paul. Modern scientific criticism holds that these are our oldest documents. There is not unanimity on all details, but there is substantial agreement among critics as to the fact that these are our earliest records of the Christian movement.

The following conclusions will scarcely be disputed by any:

First—Those elements of teaching which make Jesus Christ more than an ordinary man are present in these earliest sources in great abundance. So also the supernatural elements in general abound in the common source of Matthew and Luke. On these points there is no controversy.

Second—There is much variety among critics in their attitude towards the recognition of the historical character of the supernatural elements. Evangelical Christians accept them as genuine parts of the history as well as authentic parts of the records. Many rationalists reject them as historical while accepting them as genuine elements in the records as they have been transmitted to us.

Third—The grounds on which these elements in the records are rejected as historical events are not historical and critical grounds. There are no scientific grounds for such rejection. The

evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of these passages is quite as convincing as the evidence for other parts freely accepted by rationalistic interpreters. We have seen how Martineau applies a subjective ethical test and remakes the entire record. So also Harnack supplied an example of rejection of a great saying of Jesus, not on historical or critical grounds, but because the saying seemed to teach too high a view of Christ's Person.

Fourth—There is agreement among scholars of all schools on two vitally important points. One is agreement in exegesis. Scientific exegesis yields the doctrine of the deity of Christ, and his atoning death and resurrection from the dead. There is no longer any serious controversy on the interpretation of these passages. The other point is the critical grounds on which these earliest documents may be judged. No sufficient reasons for rejecting Paul's four Epistles have been assigned. No criticism has been able to bring forward grounds for rejecting the Gospel of Mark and the document from which Matthew and Luke drew some of their material.

At the next stage we encounter very radical differences. The evangelical group insists on accepting in their essential significance the great body of facts and teachings contained in these documents. Modernists and rationalists insist that both the alleged facts and the doctrines must be rejected. Our next task is to consider some

of the ways in which they have attempted to accomplish this task.

There are at least three types of opinion, or schools of thought, to be briefly indicated in this connection. Each of the three attempts to reduce Jesus Christ and the New Testament to smaller proportions than appear on the face of the record. Each brings to bear a principle or criterion of judgment which is considered sufficient to make good its position. They all differ in their conclusions as to the elements of the New Testament which may be regarded as original and authentic. They all agree in rejecting the supernatural element.

The first is what has been called the liberal Protestant view. One of the best examples of it is set forth in Professor Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christenthums*. It is the same general type of opinion held by Martineau, referred to on an earlier page. The center of all is the ethical and spiritual axioms found in the teaching of Jesus. He was a very superior Jewish teacher, possibly with something of a Messianic consciousness. He taught God's Fatherhood, his providential care, and the worth of man. These include the chief elements in his message. He may have been a magnetic healer. But the miracles, regarded as a special working of divine power, are rejected. The belief in the resurrection and the second coming were engrafted upon the original teachings at a later date by the disciples.

The second is known as the Apocalyptic school. The chief representative is Schweitzer.[19] According to this view the ethical teaching of Jesus is reduced to a minimum. Everything was concentrated upon the future. The apocalyptic phases of his teaching constitute the essence of the original message of Jesus. He had no thought of founding an earthly Church or Kingdom. He was an enthusiast and fanatic who believed he would very soon return to earth and become the Judge of the world. In fact he at one time thought his coming as the divine Christ would take place in a few weeks. But when this failed he gave himself up to death and the belief in a resurrection which would quickly be succeeded by his coming to judge men. After his death, disciples had "visions" of him as risen and glorified. Gradually these beliefs became the basis for the Christian movement.

The chief point to be noticed here is that the Apocalyptic school emphasizes precisely what the liberal Protestant school omits, or minimizes to the vanishing point. The one exalts apocalypticism and makes little of the ethical teachings. The other exalts the ethical teachings and makes little of the apocalyptic element.

The third school resorts to comparative re-

[19] His views are given in the English translations of two books, viz.: *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God: The Secret of Jesus' Messiahship and Passion,* and a later book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.*

ligion as a means of explaining the contents of the New Testament records. This school holds with Schweitzer that the first disciples modified the original teachings of Jesus. But the transformation took place under the influence of the religions of the Hellenic world surrounding Palestine. Pagan religions had various "mystery cults." There were groups of religionists who worshiped hero-gods. Among the gods were Osiris and Isis, Dionysus and various others. The hero-god was called "Lord." When Christianity came into contact with these cults this "Lordship" was transferred to Christ. Various other features of the cults were added to the Christian teaching and as a result came the Christianity of the New Testament which exalts Jesus to the position of divine and eternal Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

This school finds very little of the original teaching of Jesus in the records. Some parables remain. Righteousness, love and fellowship in the Kingdom of God he taught. He died a martyr to the truth at the hands of various hostile Jewish groups. Most, if not all, the writers of the New Testament, on this supposition, combined many new elements with the original facts. Paul of course was one of the chief offenders in this respect.[20]

[20] See Gore's *Belief in Christ,* pp. 35ff. Also *Kyrios Christos,* by Bousset, and *Landmarks of Early Christianity,* by Kirsopp Lake, for expositions of this theory.

My plan in this volume does not call for detailed reply to the above theories. This has been done by others. In the next chapter more will be said about the last theory. What I have to say here deals with the more fundamental aspects of the controversy. All that is necessary for my present purpose is a fair statement of the views under consideration. The above are meant to be brief outlines. They at least give enough of the theories to indicate their chief points and the method of dealing with the New Testament.

What, then, is to be said of these theories and their method of handling the New Testament? First of all, they abandon the standpoint of scientific historical criticism. Their advocates do not construct their views upon the facts or data supplied by the New Testament writings themselves. They do not draw their conclusions in this field as they do in other fields of historic research. These writings are not permitted to be their own witnesses. In each of the theories some alien principle is introduced. The liberal Protestant view settles historical questions by applying our subjective moral intuitions. The Apocalyptic theory arbitrarily selects one phase of New Testament teaching to the exclusion of the rest. The third view applies a vague analogy, drawn from Hellenistic cults, to the New Testament and thus finds yet another principle of selection. Now if some sound and valid ideal, law or principle were cited to justify the rejec-

tion of the parts which do not fit the theory in each of these instances, there might be some cogency in the appeal. But no such justification is offered. It is quietly assumed that any sort of treatment is permissible in dealing with this literature if the purpose is to disintegrate and discredit it.

Secondly, it is to be noted that the method employed virtually cancels the whole story of the origin of Christianity. The rejected supernatural elements are so inwrought and inwoven with the entire New Testament that they cannot be taken out without leaving the entire fabric in shreds and tatters. The jungle of myths and speculations and idealizations which grew up after Jesus lived found their way into these records so that his image is almost completely obscured. What we see is a shadowy figure without definite form, flitting hither and thither on the other side of a jungle. What we hear is not the original voice but a faint echo. The Jesus of history has vanished from the pages of history. We are confronted with the alternative: either no Jesus at all, or else the Jesus Christ of evangelical faith.

Third, the theories give no hope of any solution of the problems of historical criticism. The reason is that they employ no criterion of judgment which can settle any question. The theorists pursue exactly the bad methods of some interpreters of the Bible. They ignore the context. They select arbitrarily such verses of Scripture

as dovetail with the proof they are seeking for a doctrine or teaching. You can prove almost anything by the Bible in this way. It is a fresh example of a method well illustrated by a measure of beans emptied on the table. You can make the beans spell anything you please by arranging them arbitrarily. They can be made to spell any number of contradictory views by skillful manipulation. The liberal Protestant view manipulates the beans by means of the moral intuitions, accepting or rejecting in accordance with this principle. The Apocalypticists rearrange the beans and spell out an entirely new result by means of their theory and reject the teaching and character of Jesus so clearly "proved" by the method of the moral intuitions. The school of Comparative Religion begins the process all over again from a new standpoint. And verily, they also have their reward, because they knew when they began where they would end. It is easy to manipulate the beans as they lie before you on the table. But the method leads nowhere. It is the worst kind of cul-de-sac. There is room for any number of new theories. Each may vindicate itself by pointing to its own rearrangement of the beans. The result is perfectly clear in each case. But the unfortunate aspect of this whole movement is that it is an abandonment of the scientific method, which does not manipulate the beans, but takes them as they appear and asks what they signify. This theory-making is now a

favorite sport in the realm of New Testament research. But it is diversion from serious work, and ought to give place to something better.

There is no question here of admitting light from any source upon the New Testament. If there is to be found anything in contemporary thought or religion to aid in our understanding of the New Testament, by all means let the light shine in. But this is wholly apart from the question of adopting arbitrary methods. It has no relation to the medieval habit of finding your abstract principle before you begin, and then deducing your conclusion. Once the rationalists tried to show that the New Testament writers did not mean what they seemed to say about the miracles and the deity of Christ. Scientific exegesis drove them from this position. Later they admitted that exegesis yielded the results claimed by the evangelicals. Then they retired to the myth-making propensity of the disciples, to explain these supernatural elements. Later still the moral intuitions were cited to "disprove" them. This being precarious from the standpoint of historical science, a further retreat was made to the current theories and methods. The latest and loudest in its claims is the theory of the comparative religionists. The bottom seems to fall out of each theory in turn, and the work has to be done over again from a new standpoint. There is a southern Negro story that a blue-jay tried to fill a hollow tree with pebbles. He la-

bored long without success. At length he discovered that the pebbles which he dropped in above fell through another hole lower down the trunk of the tree. He abandoned the task of trying to fill a bottomless hole. Methods of handling the New Testament which abandon scientific loyalty to fact and sound critical principles can never result in filling a bottomless hole. The problems are hopelessly insoluble in this way.

Some of the advocates of the rationalistic theories frankly admit that their world-view or philosophy controls their attitude to the New Testament sources. It is an obvious characteristic of these theories without the admission. If men begin with the denial of the possibility of a supernatural event, all the evidence is annuled before it is brought forward. If God is conceived of as limited to an immanent relation to man and nature, there can be no such thing as the divine will producing something new from without. It is all a re-making of the world theoretically before we search it to find out how it is made actually. It is not the process of first discovering the facts and then forming a theory to correspond. As we have seen there are many possible philosophic views of the world, which are legitimate from the intellectual standpoint, so long as we look at the universe as a whole. But when we deal with a historical movement, involving God and man in their relations, it is first of all necessary to apply the canons or rules of his-

torical research. You cannot treat the realm of personality and freedom as if it were the realm of chemistry or mechanics, or even of biology. It is this truth that is the guaranty of the ephemeral character of some of the current reconstructions of the New Testament. These are in the fashion, but the fashion is not in the center of the scientific movement of our inductive age. It is an eddy which will lose its force. It is bound to lose its force, or modern science will give place once more to medievalism and *a priorism.* And the latter alternative is unthinkable.

If the current theories are out of touch with the scientific, so also are they out of touch with the religious spirit. For one thing they never make connection with the historical Jesus. They do not at all show his relation to the religious life of more than nineteen centuries. Consider this point: most of these theories do not even go back to the earliest Christian literature. The oldest recognized documents we have are some of Paul's Epistles. The Synoptic Gospels were composed later, say after A.D. 60. But most of the theorists stop with the synoptic records. They select one or another group of statements in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Why not also allow the earlier witness of Paul?

In his last book, *Jesus and the Gospel,* Dr. James Denny has shown conclusively that the New Testament as a whole bears witness to a faith in Jesus Christ which is uniform. There

are variations in the point of view of the various writers. There are some differences of emphasis. But everywhere Jesus Christ is lifted above the merely human level. Being man he is also God. In other words, he was the Object and not merely the example of faith.[21] One very striking fact should be noted. In the gospel there is no contradiction of Paul's high view of the Person of Jesus. The premises of these writers were the same in this respect. If Paul had been an innovator in his teaching as to the divine Christ, the later synoptic writers would have corrected him. But we find no such correction. Throughout Matthew, Mark and Luke, as well as in the common source behind the first and third Gospels, we find the same high conception of a supernatural Christ.

We must go back to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead if we are to discover the origin of the Christian movement in these records. This is the uniform testimony of the Gospels, the Acts, and of the Apostle Paul. The resurrection explains the Christian movement. Dr. C. C. Hall says the "ultimate fact is the resurrection: the Dead of whom he (Paul) speaks is already and eternally the Living One. But for this the meaning of the death were gone." Again, speaking of Paul's conviction, he says that "his mind pours itself into the channel of hypothesis, and portrays the desolation that enfolds the Incar-

[21] See concluding section of Denny's *Jesus and the Gospel.*

nation, the Cross and Christianity alike, 'if Christ be not risen.' As if to exhaust the category of negation he traces the five-fold catastrophe of an incarnation consummated by a death uncrowned by resurrection. The vanity of preaching: 'If Christ be not risen our preaching is vain'; the emptiness of belief: 'If Christ be not risen your faith also is vain'; the falsehood of testimony: 'If Christ be not risen we are found false witnesses of God'; the failure of redemption: 'If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins'; the collapse of hope: 'If Christ be not risen, then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.' "[22]

In conclusion let us glance backward a moment at the meaning of these facts: If we are to find any historical origin of Christianity we must seek it in the oldest literature. In these Epistles of Paul the Christian movement is traced to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The synoptic records of later date confirm Paul's witness and portray the life which preceded the death and resurrection. The entire New Testament implies the same cause of the Christian movement. If now we reject this testimony, we abandon all effort to find the historical origin of Christianity. We confess thus the complete breakdown of historical science in the New Testament field. All we have left is speculative re-

[22] I Cor. 15: 14-20. See *Universal Elements in the Christian Religion,* by C. C. Hall, pp. 170-171.

constructions of various kinds. These reconstructions accept parts and reject other parts of the records at will. But the parts rejected are as well attested critically and historically as the parts accepted. Thus it becomes self-evident that the confessed breakdown of historical science was not a breakdown after all. The principles, canons, methods and ideals of historical science sustain these accepted and rejected parts of the records in their essential testimony. Modern scholarship in this outcome reaches a strange anti-climax. Historical science, in the hands of its alleged champions and votaries, is humbled to the dust. It is told to stand aside as of little worth, while some world-view or philosophic preconception sits upon the throne of judgment and separates the sheep and goats of truth and falsehood in these records. This is *a priorism* wearing a new guise, coming back from the past to hinder the work of science. Therefore I have as little fear that these new theories will permanently survive as I have that Medievalism will return and dominate the thought and life of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER X

REDUCING CHRISTIANITY: COMPARATIVE RELIGION [1]

It is necessary to consider very briefly another method of reducing the Christian Religion. It is the latest theory. It seeks the explanation of the New Testament in the environment in which the Gospels and Epistles were written. We are told that if we compare the teachings of the Gospels, and particularly of the Pauline Epistles, with the teachings of the religious cults of the New Testament age, we shall discover the sources of the distinctive Christian ideas. This theory is of comparatively recent date in its developed form. In fact it is as yet scarcely full-grown. There will be new variations, because the method lends

[1] List of books: Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen;* K. Lake, *Earlier Epistles of Saint Paul;* Cumont, *Astrology and Religion;* Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion;* Inge, *Christian Mysticism;* Bousset, *Religion des Judentums;* also *Jesus der Herr* and *Kyrios Christos;* Glover, *The Jesus of History;* Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature;* Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion,* and *Christianity and Liberalism;* Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States;* G. Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion;* Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions;* Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie;* Vos, *The Kyrios Christos Controversy* in *Princeton Theological Review,* XV, 1917, pp. 21-89; Mackintosh, *The Originality of the Christian Message.*

itself easily to new ways of interpreting the New Testament. But it is easy to grasp the controlling aim and principle. There is no space here for a full treatment. The footnote gives a list of books which will assist the reader who desires to pursue the subject.

I begin by granting freely the value of the method of comparative religion. It is always suggestive to place any group of religions side by side and study the parallels and contrasts. Christianity asks for no special treatment in this particular. Its merits may be judged best by the comparative method of study. Consider popular religions, mystery-cults, the ideas of God, man, prayer, Providence, sin, redemption, ethics, immortality and other religious ideas. No doubt Paul came into contact with many of these in his missionary travels. There would inevitably be interesting reactions on his part to these ideas.

In taking into account this historical background of Christianity we must deal fairly with the material. We must not exclude any form of religion which will shed light on the problem. For example, we must not exclude Judaism as a contemporary religion. We must keep in mind the Judaistic environment of Jesus and the first disciples. Some of the advocates of the new theory seem to forget this fact. Professor Moffatt in his *Approach to the New Testament* recognizes the validity of the historical comparative method. He says: "Some of the explanations

may be whimsical and far-fetched, but the method itself is sound."[2] It may be added that in dealing with such comparisons one is under special obligation to discriminate between connections which are unmistakable, and those which are fanciful. It is easy to convert vague resemblances into definite relationships. The imagination is remarkably fruitful when once it is enlisted in a search for that which is greatly desired.

It has been shown conclusively that some of the terms employed by Paul are found in the language of the Mystery Religions of the Hellenistic world. It has been made clear also that some of these terms denote ideas closely akin to some of those in Paul's teaching. He probably took advantage of this similarity of meaning to make clear his own ideas. Among these words are the following: *pneuma* (spirit), *pneumatikos* (spiritual), *psyche* (soul), *psychikos* (natural or psychical), *nous* (mind), *gnosis* (knowledge). All these and others are found in the literature of the Mystery Religions. The theory alleges that Paul borrowed both the words and the ideas, and made them a part of his Christian message. Professor Kennedy in his volume, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions,* carefully examines the numerous points in the controversy in the light of the Old Testament. He concludes as follows: "Practically every leading conception in this sphere of Paul's religious thought may be said to have its

[2] *The Approach to the New Testament,* p. 122.

roots definitely laid in that soil."[3] Again, in concluding a long discussion, he writes: "The evidence we have adduced from the Old Testament makes it wholly superfluous to seek for the explanations of Paul's use of any of these terms in Hellenistic Mystery Religion. What we do learn from the parallels is the ability of many of his readers to catch the meaning of a more or less technical terminology, due not merely to a course of instruction in the Old Testament, but to their acquaintance with a vocabulary already current among the Mystery associations."[4]

What was more natural or, indeed, inevitable than that Paul should employ current terms to convey his Christian message? Every missionary is compelled to do this. Christian meanings are put into these words. Otherwise it would be necessary to create a new vocabulary. And surely it is not surprising to find general similarities of meanings in the words employed in the various religions of the world. Paul's ideas sprang originally from the Old Testament. The Greek words came for the most part from the Septuagint translation. When he was converted to Christ these ideas and words blossomed in new and expanded meanings. When he found a point of contact with the Gentile mind through kindred words or ideas his pedagogic instinct led him to utilize it.

[3] *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, pp. 154-5.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

Consider in the next place one or two of Paul's leading ideas. First, we may notice his designation of Christ as "Lord." This involves one of the crucial points in the theory. It brings into the spot-light the alleged event which enables the theorist to reduce the Christian religion, as if by magic, to something totally different from what we have thought hitherto. Bousset is one of the chief protagonists of this view. The event occurred in the church at Antioch or Damascus, or Tarsus, where Gentile converts to Christianity were present. The title Lord was familiar to them in the Mystery Religions as applied to the heathen gods. It had not yet been applied to Jesus. There was religious ecstasy and excitement from time to time in the worship of these churches. Suddenly some one in his enthusiasm for Jesus exclaimed, "Jesus, Lord!" In harmony with the custom of the Mystery-cult Jesus henceforth became Lord. He was raised to the dignity of God. Henceforth he is not merely imitated, as a very pious prophet consecrated to God, but worshiped also as a divine being. He became thus not only our example, but also an Object of worship. Thus Jesus was "deified" some years after the Christian movement began. The first church at Jerusalem knew nothing of him as a divine Lord and Object of worship. Such is the theory.

The reply must be stated briefly, and the details cannot be given within the limits of this

discussion. There are three objections to this theory. First, all the direct evidence we have points to the use of the title Lord as applied to Jesus in the earliest church at Jerusalem. Second, the method by which the new theory justifies the later origin of the term leads logically to the discrediting of the entire gospel record. Third, ample evidence for the origin and meaning of the term as applied to Jesus is found in the Old Testament.

First, then, all the direct evidence we have points to the early use of the term as applied to Jesus. The book of Acts gives us the historical background of early Christianity. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost Peter says: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). This verse is really the keynote of the book of Acts. Everywhere in it Jesus is the exalted Lord and Saviour. This is self-evident to the most casual reader. So also our oldest Gospel, Mark, portrays Jesus as the mighty worker. It teems with miracles. Everywhere it reflects the divine dignity of Christ. In Mark 11:3 we read the words of Jesus: "If any man say unto you, why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither." So also in Mark 12:35-37 Jesus represents David as calling the Messiah Lord and claims the title for himself. In like manner in Matthew 7:21

and Luke 6:46 Jesus claims the title. There are other passages which need not be cited. The teaching as to the divine dignity of Jesus by no means hinges solely upon the use of the title Lord. That dignity is reflected in manifold other ways in Mark and in the common source behind Matthew and Luke, as well as in these Gospels generally.

There is no dispute about the use of the title by Paul in his early epistles. This is the fact for which the theory attempts to account. As our earliest documents these epistles bear on their faces the evidence of the use of Lord as applied to Jesus by the early Christians. Professor Machen in his excellent volume, *The Origin of Paul's Religion,* points out numerous other indications in Paul's writings apart from the employment of the designation by the Apostle himself for its early rise. But it is easy for a theorist, when once launched upon the high seas of speculative reconstruction, to steer a course which will land him in any desired haven.[5] Hence many ingenious explanations are advanced by the theorists to account for these passages.

The second objection to the theory is that the method employed discredits the entire gospel witness. The elimination of the sections of the records which indicate that Jesus was regarded as Lord by the early Christians is not justified on any valid critical grounds. The parts of the

[5] See Machen: *The Origin of Paul's Religion,* pp. 298-303.

records retained by the theorists might as easily be rejected. So far as historical science and critical methods are concerned, there is every reason for rejecting the story of the Jewish prophet and saint as well as that of the divine Lord and Saviour. It is, of course, conceivable that a guess or surmise might fathom the mystery as to controverted writings. But in order to commend itself to thoughtful minds, such a guess would have to harmonize the discordant elements to a very high degree of probability. Bousset's theory, in the light of common sense, does not succeed in producing such harmony. There is indeed one point of contact between Paul and the Mystery-cults. Both employ the designation Lord, Paul applying it to Jesus, the latter to the gods of the various cults. But surely one point of agreement does not prove identity in other respects. Otherwise we could easily prove almost anything: that an oak tree is an elm, that a hovel is a palace, that a piece of jazz is a classical masterpiece, and so on. There is no serious literary or critical problem to solve if we assume that the Epistles of Paul tell the truth. Jesus was called Lord from the beginning of the Christian movement. Paul simply employs the common designation. Surely the modern exacting scientific mind is not going to be satisfied with a method which first creates a problem where none exists, and then finds a solution in a rather far-fetched theory.

The third objection to the theory is that the

light shed upon it by the Old Testament makes it unnecessary. Paul was a Jew. Indeed, as he tells us, he was a Pharisee. He belonged to the straitest sect of the Jews. He was saturated with Jewish teaching. From earliest youth he imbibed it. Now the Jews were monotheists. Their God was the one and only God. The Old Testament was the source book for Paul's religious ideas. In the Old Testament not only is monotheism taught; it is also taught in opposition to the cult-gods of the surrounding nations. This opposition was a part of Paul's religious heritage. The apostle was familiar with the Hebrew Old Testament and the Septuagint translation into Greek. The latter was in use among Hellenistics, Jews and converts to Judaism where Paul preached as a missionary. Now the Septuagint makes abundant use of the Greek word *Kyrios* (Lord), in translating the Hebrew word for Jehovah. The word Lord, then, was a name for the divine being. This Old Testament usage amply explains Paul's application of the word to Jesus. The uniqueness and majesty of his character as he appears in the Gospels justified such application. He was the divine Son of God and Saviour of the world.

In view of this Old Testament usage, and of Paul's Jewish antecedents and training and convictions, his monotheism, his antipathy to heathen religious ideas, why should it be considered necessary to explain his use of the term by the Mys-

tery-cults? Did this forceful personality, this aggressive and self-assertive apostle suddenly become a religious opportunist, dropping all his inherited convictions and antipathies when he came into contact with these cults? There are numerous indications in his epistles that he did no such thing. For example, in I Cor. 8:5-6 he writes: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in the earth (as there are gods many and lords many), yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him." It is as evident as anything can be from such language that the apostle thinks of the Lord he preaches in contrast with rather than in conformity to the "lords" of the religious cults of the period. In fact he thinks always of his Gospel as something new in the world. It is an exclusive thing. To the Greeks it was foolishness, and to the Jews a stumblingblock. There were Jewish antecedents, and Greek points of contact for his ideas. But his fundamental message was neither Greek nor Jewish. Christ crucified and risen, the power of God and the wisdom of God, who appeared to Paul on the Damascus road, was the heart of his message. There is no way of reconciling his statement that his Gospel was "foolishness" to the Greeks, with the theory that he borrowed his leading ideas from the Greeks.

It is not my intention to extend this account of the Mystery-cults. But as an example of the sweeping generalizations of the theorists I quote a statement of Loisy and then Dr. Kennedy's reply to him. Says Loisy concerning Jesus Christ: "He was a Saviour-God, after the manner of an Osiris, an Attis, a Mithra. Like them he belonged by his origin to the celestial world, like them he had made his appearance on earth, like them he had accomplished a work of universal redemption, efficacious and typical; like Adonis, Osiris, and Attis, he had died a violent death, and like them he had prefigured in his lot that of the human beings who should take part in his worship, and commemorate his mystic enterprise; like them he had predestined, prepared and assured the salvation of those who became partners in his passion."[6]

Dr. Kennedy, referring to the above from Loisy, remarks that "nothing is more misleading than an inaccurate use of terminology." The term Saviour-God is not applied to Jesus by Paul. "Nor is it legitimate to call Osiris or Attis 'saviour-gods' in the sense in which 'Saviour' is applied by Paul to Jesus." Again: "Paul knew Jesus as an historical Person" whose death was the pledge of God's love to men. "Osiris and Attis were originally mythological personifications of the processes of vegetation. The legends of their death have nothing to do with the pur-

[6] Quoted from *Hibbert Journal,* October, 1911.

pose of a spiritual redemption. There is no parallel between the New Testament narrative of the Incarnation, which meant so much for Paul, and the myths which recount their history. It is a caricature to compare the story of the murder of Osiris, or the self-destruction of Attis, with that of the self-sacrificing death of Jesus. Nor is any real comparison possible between the New Testament view of the resurrection of Jesus and the restoration to life of these mythical divine persons." The resurrection of Christ, which cannot be explained away, converted the despair of the disciples into victorious joy, while "the return to life of Osiris and Attis is embodied in grotesque myths." There is the widest chasm of difference between the frenzied dances and other ecstatic features of the worship in the Mystery-cults, and the ethical and spiritual exaltation of the teachings of Paul.[7]

It would be easy to show that in all essential respects Paul's Gospel appears as a contrast to the mystery-cults. There were similar general ideas, of course. This is true of all religions. But fundamentally the contrasts, not the likenesses, stand forth. Both were religions of redemption and conceived of man as needing divine help. The Mystery-cults were lacking in a sense of sin and guilt. Redemption was from fate, necessity, suffering or despair. With Paul sal-

[7] See Kennedy: *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions,* pp. 211-215.

vation was from sin unto righteousness. In the Mystery-cults there is little stress on character. With Paul character of the loftiest kind results from faith in Christ. In the Mystery-cults the method of making connection with the god was vague and variable. With Paul it was uniformly faith in a crucified and risen Christ. With the Mystery Religions there were numerous myths and speculations at the foundation of all. With Paul there was a supreme historical fact, the Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Christ. In the Mystery Religions regeneration was through outward ceremonies. In Paul's teaching it was due to the working of God's Holy Spirit in the heart. In the Mystery-cults the ideal of the worshiper was to become deified. Paul never loses sight of our human finite personality, although he represents man as morally transformed. He is never pantheistic in his view of man or God. In the Mystery Religions there is no great unifying and constructive principle. In Paul, Christ crucified binds all together in a supreme moral and spiritual unity.

Many of the ablest scholars doubt whether the Mystery Religions had developed sufficiently in the first century to have had any great influence upon early Christianity. Dr. H. R. Mackintosh says: "I am bound to point out that scholars of the rank of Wernle, Moffatt and Schweitzer openly doubt whether in the first century there so much as existed any Mystery-religion centered

upon the idea of a Redeemer-God."[8] The development of these religions came later. The earlier period witnessed their introduction perhaps from the east. There was a gradual growth. In many instances Christianity may have influenced them.

I think that Paul's Epistles bear on their face a refutation of the theory we are considering. Look at Galatians and Romans, for instance. In Galatians he inveighs against "another" or false gospel. There is intense and passionate conviction. He says: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). This certainly does not read like the words of a religious opportunist who picked up his ideas here and there in his travels. Again he gives a detailed account of his direct relation to Christ: "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." He later conferred with Peter and James in Jerusalem. Later still he resisted Peter to his face because he dissembled in his attitude towards the Gospel Message (Gal. 1:15ff., and 2:11ff.).

In the Epistle to the Romans we have a like intensity of conviction, a like definiteness and clearness of teaching, a corresponding sense of a

[8] Mackintosh: *The Originality of the Christian Message*, p. 84.

divine call and mission. Paul was not a lump of plastic clay taking the shape of external circumstances. He was no passive receptacle for any sort of religious teachings which might be floating around in his environment. He was a personality of tremendous force and originality. He could be moved only by great spiritual forces. He himself tells us what changed his life. The story is told more than once in the book of Acts, in public addresses of the apostle. It is retold in slightly different form in Galatians. It is clearly implied in Romans. It was the story of his conversion to Christ on the Damascus road, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son to me." This is the key to his career. And the modern theory which converts this type of man into a sort of spiritual echo of vague religious ideas derived from the Mystery-cults, to say the least, seems "whimsical and far-fetched," not to say arbitrary and unthinkable. A Jew becomes an ecstatic devotee of Gentile mysteries. A Jewish monotheist becomes tolerant of Dionysus, Osiris, Attis, and other gods of the Gentiles. An aggressive Apostle of truth as he conceives it becomes the passive recipient of ideas casually encountered in his travels. An exclusivist in religion suddenly becomes a syncretist, tolerant of diverse elements. A personality of marked originality and force wanes into a plagiarist of other men's ideas. The thing is impossible. And the theory gives the impression of being the mechanical

product of a literary carpenter and not the work of a discerning critic with a literary sense who perceives vital relations.

I will close this chapter by a few quotations from one of the ablest and most recent books, Moffatt's *The Approach to the New Testament.* This is in some ways a curious product of modern learning. The writer gives the impression at times of having no definite views on any questions raised by modern criticism. He seems like a skillful walker of a tight-rope, balancing himself by means of the long pole of the historical method. But this apparent neutrality, or what amounts to the same thing, this apparent advocacy of all views, is owing to Dr. Moffatt's aim. He is expounding the historical method of approach to the New Testament. He never quite defines the tests or criteria by which divergent theories are to be established or disproved. But he does arrive at some conclusions of his own.

In the light of the historical method, Dr. Moffatt says: "Gone or going are the days when it could be assumed that the primitive Christianity started as a hero-worship of Jesus. Gone also are the days when 'all history or all myth' could be put forward as the alternative in criticizing the Gospel tradition, or when it was imagined that there never was any Jesus at all, but that a sudden movement of monistic pantheism expressed itself symbolically in terms of a his-

torical career."[9] Again, he says: "It is not possible any longer to remain satisfied with the solutions which deny that Jesus had any Messianic consciousness at all, and that this is no more than the later reflection of his disciples."[10] A few lines farther down the page he says: "There is so much loose talk nowadays about the Fatherhood of God in the New Testament that it needs to be reiterated that the specific idea is, God the Father of Jesus, not God the Father of men."[11] "Upon the whole," he adds, "recent research corroborates the view that the consciousness of a distinct relation to God the Father is fundamental in the New Testament conception of Jesus Christ."[12] Referring to the theory that Paul drew his ideas from the Mystery Religions, Dr. Moffatt says: "They do not yield material for the explanation of the Christian tradition. In point of fact these Mystery Religions, about which after all our knowledge for the first century is rather meager, were an expression of a large religious movement which affected them and Christianity as well. It is amateurish to resolve Christianity into a mystery-cult, ignoring its distinctive features and understanding the new notes which were not drowned by the sound of outside voices."[13] Once more, referring to the attitude

[9] Moffatt: *The Approach of the New Testament*, p. 158.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 159.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

of the early disciples towards Jesus, Dr. Moffatt says: "They are looking up to him, revering him as well as remembering him, and revering him as divine. Technically expressed, this fact means that Christianity from the outset had a theology. Men did not draw together in the Christian Church under the impulse of admiration for a remarkable teacher or prophetic genius, or for a leader of high character. They adored him as divine. They recollected his last words, and they waited eagerly for his return from heaven to complete the work he had begun."

Dr. Moffatt has no doubt whatever that the records of the life of Jesus are based upon actual history. He says: "The records of the life of Jesus were drawn up by men who believed that he had risen, that he was as he had declared, Messiah, that death had not checked his power over the world." Continuing in the same connection, he says: "They had now the clew to the meaning of much that he had said and done. In the light of the resurrection, his earthly life appeared for the first time intelligible as it had not always been even to those who stood near him at the actual moment of earlier intercourse."[14] As usual, Dr. Moffatt qualifies these statements by the possibility "with which research must reckon, that they were tempted to read back into the life of Jesus their later convictions." At the same time he is firmly con-

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

vinced that we are dealing not with myths and imaginative reconstructions, but with history. He quotes the well-known passage from Rousseau's *Emile* as follows: "Shall we say that the gospel story is a work of imagination? Friend, that is not how one invents; the facts about Socrates, which no one doubts, are not so well attested as these about Jesus Christ. At best you are only putting the difficulty away from you, without getting rid of it. It would be more incredible that four men should have agreed to manufacture this book than that there was a single man who supplied the subject matter for it. No Jewish authors could have hit upon its tone, or its morality; the gospel has notes of reality which are so great, so striking, so absolutely inevitable, that their inventor would be a more astonishing person than their hero."

In approving these words of Rousseau, Dr. Moffatt does not lose his ever-present caution as an expounder of the historical method. But after entering a caution or two, he says: "But all this does not affect the essential point of the passage. Rousseau, with one of the flashes of insight which have made *Emile,* in Lord Morley's phrase, 'one of the seminal books' of the world, has summed up by anticipation in these words the position on which sound criticism of the gospels is steadily converging." [15]

The above quotations from Dr. Moffatt's recent

[15] *The Approach to the New Testament,* p. 167.

book are given because of his competency as a critic, and his utter freedom in handling the New Testament literature. He sets forth no doctrinal system. He bows to no dogmatic authority. He is biased by no leaning to orthodoxy. He evidently believes the universe is fire-proof, and does not hesitate to drop burning matches around anywhere and everywhere. He is willing to see anything go up in flames which can be burned. I am frank to say he seems to go much further in some directions than his own principles seem to justify. But there is no need here to discuss this point. I am asking nothing more than that the reader look at the New Testament in the fierce light of a sound historical criticism. The outcome is clear: the historical method and the science of comparative religion have failed to shake the historical foundations of our faith. The supernatural element stands secure. The resurrection of Christ cannot be eliminated from these records by any valid canons of criticism or laws of thought. And this prepares the way for us to consider the supreme fact of all history, the irreducible Christ.

CHAPTER XI

THE IRREDUCIBLE CHRIST: CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

It will be useful at this point to glance backward over the ground we have covered. I pointed out at the beginning that the value of religion is its distinctiveness. It does not contradict any other form of life and culture. But it presents a contrast to all other forms. It is because of this contrast that it enriches and glorifies human life. It follows from this that we are on a false trail when we strive to make the Christian religion conform to science or philosophy, or anything else. These are all co-workers on the temple of life. But it were folly to compel the bricklayer to do the work of the architect, or the interior decorator to run the derrick by which steel girders are hoisted into place.

It was also pointed out that the Chistian religion is autonomous and free. It makes its own claims. It brings its own credentials. It has its own tests and criteria of truth and reality. It is to be judged by its own merits. Alien tests do not and cannot touch its inherent power. It goes on functioning in its own way even though in some academic circles it is classified with mechanical causes, chemical reactions, biological processes, philosophic speculations and social reforms. Men

never understand what the Christian religion really is until they recognize its uniqueness. When they labor to accredit it in some new way, to find for it some new bill of rights, some new Magna Charta of liberty aside from that which Christianity brings in its own hands, they may amuse themselves for a time, but they do not at all interrupt its flow, like a warm gulf stream, through the ocean of human life. Our conclusion was that this religion erected by Jesus Christ must be judged as religion and not as something else. As such it combines all other activities in a higher unity and glorifies them, but it is not to be confused with them.

We examined next four of the current ways of reducing Christianity, the scientific, the philosophic, the critical, and the method of comparative religion. In each instance it was found that Christianity was measured by an alien principle. No contradiction was discovered anywhere between the Christian religion and other forms of life and culture. But we did discover the folly and danger of the invasion of one sphere by the devotees of some other.

The principle of continuity, so useful in physical science, suffers complete breakdown when made a sufficient principle of explanation in religion. It ignores the fact of freedom and spirit and personality, and the fact of fellowship between God and man. The principle of rationality, so indispensable in building systems of philoso-

phy, is inadequate for religion. There are many systems of philosophy divergent or contradictory, each resting upon a "sound metaphysic." But by their inherent nature these systems are all partial insights and consequently remain in a state of unstable equilibrium. Hence they are incapable of satisfying man's religious hunger for God. Indeed the rational process working by itself may, and often does repudiate the idea of God and religion.

We have also seen that the higher criticism, when fairly applied to the New Testament, leaves intact all the higher teachings about Jesus Christ. The various processes by which these teachings were eliminated were seen to rest on illegitimate grounds. Any thoughtful student can remake the gospel story by applying to it a subjective criterion of judgment. But this is not scientific criticism, nor is it the historical method. It really leaves the problem of Jesus suspended in the air with no hope of a solution. The certain antidote for this sort of illegitimate criticism is the scientific spirit and method.

We have also seen that the effort to derive Christianity from the Mystery Religions is a failure. There were some similar general religious ideas and certain points of agreement. But fundamentally the contrasts rather than the likenesses are most manifest. On the well-established basis of Old Testament teachings and on the necessary assumption of the historicity of Jesus we can ex-

plain the New Testament and the Christian movement without recourse to the Mystery-cults.

We may conclude then that the scientific effort to reduce Christianity by means of the principle of causality, and the philosophic effort to reduce it by the principle of rationality, are bound to fail, because they run directly counter to man's religious consciousness. Both of them leave out vital and essential factors of religion itself. And this is a fatal defect. Converting religion into something which may be defended from a non-religious standpoint, these attempts empty religion of all that makes it valuable and desirable.

We may conclude further that the effort of criticism and comparative religion to reduce Christianity are bound to fail for two reasons: first, because of what Jesus Christ is known to be in the redeemed life and religious experience of his people; and second, because these methods of reduction transfer the whole question as to Christ and Christianity out of the realm of history into the realm of speculation. Abandon the historical method in dealing with the sources and you have a hopeless problem. Try to reconstruct Christianity by tracing vague analogies or resemblances to other religions and almost any theory can be justified.

It follows then that Christianity is at the cross roads. We face a great issue. The alternatives are clear. On the one hand we may listen to the voice of the New Testament, of a sound criticism,

of a sound historical method, to the voice of a regenerating and redeeming Christian experience, to the voice of history during two thousand years and thus retain all the great elements in our historic faith. On the other hand we may listen to alien voices, that of physical science, philosophic speculation, subjective criticism, and comparative religion and thus reduce Christianity to the dimensions of an ethical movement or philosophic cult. The world had already achieved such an ethic and such a philosophy before Christ began to transform the world. And I believe there is as little danger that Christianity will abandon its historic faith as that civilization will abandon the steam engine and automobile and go back to the ox-cart.

There is perfect harmony between Christianity and science and philosophy and the historical method. There is no conflict except when the nature of each is forgotten or false definitions are given, or the respective spheres ignored. Christians simply assume religion as a fact of life, a necessity for man. It is something to be accepted as a fact, calling for our recognition, not something suspended in the balance until some refined intellectual process has been completed. Christ comes to meet the religious ideal and fulfill our religious hopes and needs. But it is not the reduced Christ of modern rationalism and naturalism. It is the full-orbed Son of God and Redeemer of the New Testament records, risen and glorified. To be sure a rational philosophy of the universe

arises out of the religious life and experience which Christ mediates to man. But we first know him as the Revealer of God to our moral and spiritual life. He that willeth to do the will of the Father shall know the doctrine. And this brings me to the closing topic of this discussion, which is the irreducible Christ.

Christ in Religious Experience

The Person of Christ is for the Christian the center of man's religious life. I desire to indicate some of the aspects of Christ's work which show clearly that the reduced Christ of modern rationalism and naturalism is inadequate for the task. I will begin with Christ's relation to personal religious experience and then pass on to his relation to history and the New Testament records. I have developed the meaning of Christian experience in five chapters of my book *Why Is Christianity True?* The present treatment must necessarily be brief.[1]

Men are redeemed from the power of sin by personal faith in Jesus Christ. This is the cardinal fact for our present consideration. The Apostle Paul describes his own complete change of life in Acts 22:3-15. It was due to the appearance of Christ to him on the Damascus road. The Apostle John describes his own experience of

[1] See Mullins: *Why Is Christianity True?* Pp. 241-321. Griffith and Rowland Press, Philadelphia.

Christ as "that which we heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1-6). Polycarp, one of the early martyrs, in a dying prayer said: "I bless thee, I glorify thee, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ thy beloved Son, through whom to thee with him and the Holy Ghost be glory both now and to all ages."[2] St. Hilary's account of his conversion employs striking language as to Christ's relation to it: "God the Word was made flesh that through God the Word made flesh, flesh might go forward to God the Word." So also he says it was "being called to a new birth through faith."[3]

Luther in answering the question, What is the Word of God to be believed? says: "The Gospel of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was incarnate and crucified, and who is risen again and glorified by the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier."[4]

John Bunyan describes the spiritual act which brought him religious peace as "trust in God through Christ." Adolphe Monod speaking of his conversion says: "Hope had entered into my heart, and once entered upon the path, the God of Jesus Christ, to whom I then learned to give my-

[2] See Wace: *Foundations of Faith,* pp. 153-155.
[3] *Ibid.,* pp. 326ff.
[4] From Luther's *De Libertate Christiana, cf.* Wace, pp. 339ff.

self up, little by little, did the rest." S. H. Hadley, converted drunkard, says after the act of trust: "I felt that Christ with all his brightness and power had come into my life; that, indeed, old things had passed away and all things had become new."[5] Sir Algernon Cote sums up his experience thus: "I accepted the gift of everlasting life and Christ became my Saviour."[6] Captain Mahan in similar words describes his experience: "Scales seemed to fall from my eyes, and I began to see Jesus Christ and life as I had never seen them before."[7] Miss Emily Gregory, a professor of botany in an American college, concludes an exceedingly interesting account of her religious struggle thus: "I believed in God because he had revealed himself to me; in Christ for the same reason. Therefore Christ was now living, and he must have been raised from the dead in some form, as the story of his death is unquestionable."[8]

The preceding examples of Christian experience might be indefinitely multiplied. Indeed to give a full list would be to rewrite the story of the redemptive experience of twice-born men and women during nearly two thousand years of Christian history. Christ is the center of the experience.

[5] See Mullins' *Why Is Christianity True?* P. 252.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 253.
[7] See *Roads to Christ*, pp. 73-74.
[8] See Gregory: *A Scientist's Confession of Faith*, pp. 4, 15, 20, 21ff.

Men trust him as the Revealer of God and Redeemer of men, and he responds to their trust. In and through Christ we find God.

Now this is the evangelical Christian experience. It is organic in the New Testament records. It is organic in the history of Christianity. It is the type of experience which has inspired the great philanthropic and missionary movements of ancient and modern times. It is the type of spiritual life which sustains all the great evangelical Christian denominations to-day. This experience of redemption through Christ with its implications is the driving power of militant Christianity.

This evangelical experience contrasts at several vital points with the teaching of modern liberalism and its reduced Christ. First of all, it implies a power from without coming into man's soul to regenerate and redeem it. Modern liberalism teaches that man needs only the unfolding of what is already there. Second, it implies the fact and the sense of sin and guilt. Man needs forgiveness, renewal, and deliverance from bondage. Modern liberalism affirms that sin and guilt are something to be overcome by ourselves in a claim to divine sonship. We simply accept what is already ours and the sense of sin vanishes from consciousness. Third, the evangelical experience implies an atonement for sin. Modern liberalism affirms that no atonement was needed. Christ's

death on the cross was simply an example of sacrificial love to inspire us to the same. Fourth, the evangelical experience implies the idea of grace. God shows favor to the undeserving. Modern liberalism denies the sin that calls for grace, and relegates the idea of grace to the limbo of outgrown beliefs. Fifth, the evangelical experience calls for a spiritual attitude wholly different from that of liberalism. It requires humility, confession of sin, a sense of unworthiness, docility and teachableness. Modern liberalism depreciates all these. It is sophisticated and wise and confident. It is most sure that God's estimate of sin is not severe.

Here then are two approaches to Christ. One takes him as the prophet of Nazareth who left certain ethical teachings, who died and passed on like other men. The other takes him as the divine Son of God and Saviour, crucified for our sins, and risen from the dead. The one approach finds Christ's response in accord with its own estimate. He exerts simply a posthumous influence, through the New Testament records of his life. The other approach finds the response of Christ also in accord with its estimate. He becomes the power of God unto salvation for every one that believeth. The reduced Christ of modern liberalism is, by the admission of its own adherents, the result of certain demands created by modern culture on its intellectual side. The Christ of the

evangelical experience is simply the outcome of a profound religious need taking the New Testament records at their face value.

At this point we touch the essential weakness of modern liberalism and the essential strength of the evangelical faith. It is in the religious estimate of the two systems that the contrast is manifest. The stubborn fact of the sin, guilt, weakness, bondage, of man must be met. "Make the consciousness of Christ your own consciousness," "Realize for yourself the mind of Christ," "Claim your own divine sonship," "Dismiss the idea of sin and guilt"—these are some of the ways in which modern liberalism admonishes men. The admonitions may impress a limited group trained in certain ways. But for humanity at large it is a counsel of perfection, like telling a man to fly without wings, or pluck a star from the sky. How is a man to make the consciousness of Christ his own when there is no point of contact? The sinful cannot by sheer act of will assume the consciousness of the sinless. "Claim your divine sonship" may appeal to a superficial experience of sin. But for the man whose whole inner life is steeped in iniquity, and who knows every moment that the traits of his moral character are more Satanic than divine, it has no appeal. To him it is mockery. And the more sensitive and aroused his moral consciousness becomes, the deeper will become the mockery. What he needs is assurance of forgiveness and deliverance from bondage to

sin. I am not now discussing the doctrine of sin. I am simply pointing out a fact of man's religious life and experience. Liberalism, with its beautiful theory of "realizing the consciousness of Christ," never gets into the depths of human religious need. One marvels at the facile way in which it affirms and denies with reference to the same thing. Man is burdened with a "brute inheritance." He is full of evil because he brings the instincts of the tiger and hyena and wolf and wildcat and the various other inherited instincts of the jungle. One would infer that he needed heroic treatment spiritually before he could hope for any great things. And the evangelical view of sin, regeneration and salvation presupposes such treatment. But modern liberalism sees in man, thus burdened with the "brute inheritance," potentialities suggestive of angelic rather than brute ancestry. With a new ethical ideal and the magic method of "realizing the consciousness of Christ," the power of the brute inheritance is destroyed. Below the surface of his nature slumber all bright and glorious moral and spiritual realities. Touch the magic spring and release these slumbering potencies of his nature and the secret of endless growth is found.

The truth is that the formula of modern liberalism will not work. There is no way to evolve light out of darkness. You cannot presuppose a brute inheritance and forthwith explain its transformation into the character of divine sonship without

an adequate cause. You cannot sow corruption and reap incorruption. No recombination of the instincts of leopard and panther and wildcat and tiger can produce the moral beauty of a son of God. What man needs is redemption from sin, divine reënforcement in righteousness, the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost. "Ye must be born again."

Professor William James concludes his remarkable study of *Varieties of Religious Experience* by summing up the evangelical view in popular language. Religious experience is a sense of something wrong with us as we naturally stand; a relief from the sense of wrongness by making connection with the higher powers; and a lyric joy and peace resulting from the reconciliation with God. This experience is miraculous in the sense that divine power enters human experience and transforms men spiritually. He also says that this type of experience is peculiarly Christian. It appears in the New Testament and in Christian history but scarcely anywhere else.

Now the point to be stressed here is that the opposition which modern liberalism must meet and overcome is this religious life of evangelical Christendom. Of late liberalism has deluded itself. It has seemed to think its chief antagonist was pre-millennialism. This it has caricatured sometimes. It has often congratulated itself on showing the "crass materialism" of the millennial theory. Or it has inveighed against some lit-

eralistic doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible. Always it has assumed that the conservatism (hide-bound or mitigated) of the reactionaries has been a chief stumblingblock in the way of the triumph of liberalism. In all this liberalism has been mistaken. It is encountering an opposition that goes down to the foundations of man's religious life, back through the Christian centuries and to the most central and vital truths of the New Testament. The evangelical experience of redemption from sin and its power through faith in Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen, is the richest inheritance we have from the New Testament. It runs through the Christian ages down into the present, like the Rocky Mountain chain through the western part of this continent. Removing the Rocky Mountains would be a formidable engineering task. It is not likely to be undertaken, and it would certainly fail. There is as little likelihood that evangelical Christianity will yield to the moderns who have laid so extensive a plan for its overthrow.

CHAPTER XII

THE IRREDUCIBLE CHRIST: THE JESUS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are two thoughts which should never be separated in the discussion of the Christian religion. One is the Jesus Christ of experience, and the other the Jesus Christ of history. I glance briefly at the Jesus of the New Testament history. There is no need to develop this at length. I have done so in my volume, *Why Is Christianity True?* And it has been done by many scholars in recent years in most convincing ways. We have already seen that historical criticism and the comparative study of religion have done nothing to set aside the salient features of the New Testament records. One of the freshest and most convincing of recent books on the subject is Professor T. R. Glover's *The Jesus of History.*

Referring to the theory that the gospel stories are false, Professor Glover points out that even on this supposition the theory answers itself. He says: "Jesus then was a historical person; and about him we have a mass of stories in the Gospels, which our theory for the moment asks us to say are false; but they have a certain unity of tone, and they agree in pointing to a character of a certain type, and the general aspects and

broad outline of that character they make abundantly clear. Even on such a hypothesis we can know something of the character of Jesus. But the hypothesis is gratuitous and absurd, as the paragraphs that follow may help to show. The Gospels are essentially true and reliable records of a historical person."[1]

Referring to the testimony of the Apostle Paul, Professor Glover says: "The letters, and the theology, and its influence, establish at once Paul's claim to be a historical character. We may then ask how a man of his ability failed to observe that a non-historical Jesus, a pure figment, was being palmed off on him—on a contemporary, it should be marked—and by a combination of Jesus' own disciples with earlier friends of Paul, who were trying to exterminate them. . . . To such straits are we brought, if Jesus never existed. History becomes pure nonsense, and knowledge of historical fact impossible; and it may be noted, all knowledge is abolished if history is beyond reach."[2]

There is not the slightest question that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a central fact for the religion of the New Testament. It alone explains the Christian movement in the sense that the movement would have failed without it. All that follows presupposes and requires the resurrection. Professor Glover puts it thus:

[1] T. R. Glover: *The History of Jesus,* p. 12.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 9.

"Take away the resurrection, however it happened, whatever it was, and the history of the Church is unintelligible." Again: "Great results have great causes. We have to find, somewhere or other, between the crucifixion and the first preaching of the disciples in Jerusalem, something that entirely changed the character of that group of men. Something happened, so tremendous and vital, that it changed not only the character of the movement and the men—but with them the whole history of the world." [3]

There is no fact of history better attested or more firmly established by evidence than the resurrection of Christ from the dead. In his great argument in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the Apostle Paul appeals to more than two hundred and fifty living witnesses who saw the risen Jesus. The Gospels bear abundant witness to the sinless life, the miracles, the atoning death "for remission of sins" offered as a "ransom for many." Two of them tell the story of his birth of the Virgin Mary.

I add a word here as to the Virgin Birth. Its historical foundations are secure. But it seems to me to be required by the spiritual symmetry of Christ's earthly career. It belongs with the sinlessness, the supernatural works, the death on the cross, the resurrection and ascension. The expert in the knowledge of living forms can reconstruct from a single bone the skeleton framework of an

[3] T. R. Glover, *The History of Jesus,* pp. 188-189.

extinct animal. He works by the law of symmetry and proportion. Given the resurrection of Jesus, or his sinlessness, or any other of the supernatural features and the Virgin Birth falls into its place most naturally. It is required by the moral and spiritual symmetry of his character. If we insist upon an ordinary birth of two human parents for Jesus, while holding to the resurrection and other supernatural features, it is like trying to fit the bone of an antelope into the frame of a mastodon.

"But," says the objector, "what difference does it make whether he was born of a virgin or not?" I think it makes a very great difference in a number of ways, which there is not space to develop here. There is one point that I may emphasize. We may be sure that if Jesus was born of a Virgin Mother, as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit, it had a most vital and significant relation to all that followed. Such a fact cannot be easily eliminated from the chain of spiritual causes and forces which produced Christianity. An artesian well in an arid western plain gushes forth, an unfailing stream, to irrigate all the region. What difference does it make whether we assume that the source of supply is a pool at the bottom of the well, or high up in some mountain? It makes all the difference in the world. For water does not rise above its source. Neither does Christianity. The Virgin Birth marks the divine origin of our faith. And the heights from whence it came are the measure of the heights to which it will bear us.

In an editorial in *The Baptist Courier,* the editor, Dr. Z. T. Cody, emphasizes the relation of the Virgin Birth to man's fundamental need in religion. He emphasizes the coming of God into visible manifestation for redemption, and without such manifestation our religion would be totally changed in its character. He says:

"At first God was near men in the phenomena of nature. Next God, to maintain religion in the presence of increasing knowledge, *made* a place where he could dwell. It preserved for ages a very pure religion. And at last God came to dwell among men in the Person of his Son. When this was done the veil before the Holy of Holies was rent away. It was no longer needed, not because men were elevated above the need of having a place where God could immediately be approached in all reverence and awe, but because, *now,* there was in all reality such a Place in the ever-abiding Person of his Son. Christ's Person took the place of the Holy of Holies. Before him men can prostrate themselves in reverence, awe and in absolute submission. Hence, it is only in the Person of Christ that we have the prime condition for the very existence of true religion. If we had his teachings without his Person, we would have a system of knowledge about God and duty, but we would not have God. We would have knowledge, but not the condition for religion. And it would be doubtful if we could retain religion on this earth in these modern days when there has come a vast and universal increase in knowledge that prys into every secret of God's world and universe, if we lose faith that God himself, who made

all that we are seeking to know, and who transcends all our possibilities of knowledge, dwells in the Person of Jesus. What the Holy of Holies was to Israel's religion, this, the deity of Christ, is to Christianity."

The preceding quotation well emphasizes the relation of the Virgin Birth to the New Testament teaching of the deity of Christ. It marks his origin as unique and his personality as distinct from that of other men.

One of the most original and outstanding things in the teaching of Jesus Christ is the central place occupied by his Person in his Message. It is futile to attempt to separate the sayings of Jesus from himself. His Person is indissolubly bound up with his sayings. To omit every passage in which he himself figures, in contradistinction to his message, would be to rob the New Testament of its most vital factor. Even the Sermon on the Mount teems with references to his Person in relation to his precepts. Men are blessed when they are persecuted, "for my sake." "I came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill." "Ye have heard it said, but I say unto you." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Throughout the great discourse the Person of Jesus appears as lawgiver, Lord of the Kingdom, and the divinely authorized Revealer of the Father. He is sinless. His presence produced a sense of sin in others (Luke 5:8). He forgave sin and

expressly claimed the right to do so (Mark 2:7-12). He declares that his blood was shed for the remission of sin (Matt. 26:28). Repentance and remission of sins in his name must be preached unto all nations (Luke 24:27). He was greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6). He was Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:18). He said: "I appoint you a Kingdom" (Luke 22:29-30). He is the object of worship: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28-29). He builds a church on earth (Matt. 16:18-19). "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). He is to be the Judge of mankind (Matt., ch. 25).

Thus men came to know God through Jesus Christ. Paul's Gospel was "Jesus Christ and him crucified." He says of his personal life: "I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Christ promised the Holy Spirit whose office was to glorify Christ: "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14). John says also: "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace

and truth" (John 1:14). So also the preaching on the day of Pentecost and throughout the book of Acts, was the preaching of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and reigning Lord. All the Epistles of the New Testament interpret the spiritual life in terms of Jesus Christ. To be in Christ is to be a new creature. Old things have passed away. All things have become new (II Cor. 5:17). The cross is the center of all. Paul says: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). The Epistle to the Romans develops the relation of the death of Christ to the salvation of men.

It should never be forgotten that the hiding of the gospel's power is in personal faith in the crucified Christ. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek," declares Paul (Romans 1:16). To take Christ as a moral example apart from his power is to tell a plodder on the ground to imitate the flight of an eagle. To adopt his ethical precepts as a system for the reorganization of society and convert the gospel into a moral reform movement is to separate the effects from the causes. The power of God as revealed in the gospel flows into human life first of all, "to every one that believeth." And the crucified and risen Christ is the center of faith. The ethical outcome in a new character is necessary and inevitable. Christianity unites ethics and religion indis-

solubly. But we do not find first a system of ethical precepts and gradually thus find religion. First we find Christ, the embodiment of the religious and ethical ideal. But we find him as the Object of religious trust. Our response to him by faith opens the flood-gates of divine power in us.

Now this is a tremendous fact for religion. Let us look at it in its personal and then in some of its larger relations. To begin with, a man who is morally and spiritually sincere in his approach to Christ becomes teachable and willing to accept what Christ can give. He becomes as a little child in his willingness to be taught. This is not only the Christian attitude, it is also the scientific. Huxley commended it in a letter to Charles Kingsley. Become as a little child in the presence of a fact. This is the scientific attitude. In the realm of religion it is equally the road to truth. No one is likely to satisfy himself on this point by arguing about doctrines. Bacon said a long time ago that whether a thing is true or not is decided not by arguing, but by trying. This is the inductive method. It is the principle of the inductive method that separates modern rationalism from Christianity. Christians find Christ by "trying." Rationalism seeks to explain away the significant facts by arguing. The two groups are in trains on parallel tracks, going in opposite directions. Religion is inherently rational. But

the rational principle by itself is not inherently religious.

Faith brings the living Christ into our experience. Paul declares: "We preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumblingblock, and to Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:23-24). Individual believers are drawn together by a common spiritual bond, and groups of them form churches. Thus Christianity becomes a social movement and power in civilization. Christ remains the center of the worship and life of these churches. Consider then a few of the elements of power which Christ ministers to mankind through the saving experience of the individual and through the spiritual life of his people.

CHAPTER XIII

THE IRREDUCIBLE CHRIST: IN THE LARGER SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE WORLD

First of all he makes the spiritual universe real. Modern science has revealed the vastness and immeasurableness of the physical universe in an astounding way. The human mind simply cannot grasp it. Many have used this undeniable physical greatness of nature to discredit the story of the Incarnation. Celsus laughed at the early Christians and compared them to frogs in a swamp, holding a conference and congratulating themselves that God had become incarnate to save them. Some moderns take up the taunt of Celsus, and point to the absurdity of the Christian claim as to God in Christ, by comparing the little mole-hill of a planet on which we live, with the cosmos as a whole. But somehow the taunt falls flat. Men still hold up their heads as spiritual beings. They still believe in the moral and spiritual dignity of man. And this is because Christ makes and keeps the spiritual universe alive in men's hearts. They know that however rich in suns and planets and systems God may be, the greatest thing in him is love and pity and care for his intelligent creatures. A man might own a hundred department stores. But if he had no interest in the dangerous illness of his own child no

one would consider this neglect a mark of greatness. His care for his own offspring would be the crown of his greatness. Materialism cannot "terrorize the imagination" of Christians by any such comparisons. We know a spiritual universe as real as the physical. Christ has brought it to us in his revelation of God and he keeps it alive in the modern world. Our affirmation of that universe is as genuine and passionate as any which science can make. It is inspired by devotion to the real in spiritual things which Christ himself creates.

Again, Christ shows us that the center of the spiritual universe is God the Father. This was a great note of originality in the teaching of Jesus, not the general idea of Fatherhood, but its meaning and content. Dr. H. R. Mackintosh says: "It is not that we register a crucial advance in the reading of God's character, but—and here the novelty is plain—the newly revealed Fatherhood is seen to be forever correlative to, and controlled by the filial experience of a Man. God, for the Christian mind, is the Father corresponding to Jesus as Son; we see him reflected, without break or shadow, in the Redeemer's soul." Love, Holiness and Power are the three great traits of the Father whom Christ revealed.[1]

I remark next that Jesus reveals to us that the cross is the key to God's character. Dr. Mackin-

[1] Mackintosh: *The Originality of the Christian Message*, p. 39.

tosh considers the cross in Christianity an idea vitally different from anything found elsewhere. "The thought, then, of Divine self-sacrifice, interpreted in purely moral terms (except that grace is not moral only, but more), ranks as a central and distinctive feature of the Christian message. Only here is forgiveness mediated to the penitent—as always when Man's pardon of man is imparted nobly—through the cost of God the Forgiver. It is not, as in old religions, a sacrifice by which unfriendly Godhead is propitiated and induced to have mercy; it is sacrifice made by God himself in free and illimitable love through the loving heart of Jesus and his filial obedience even 'unto death.' For this we search in vain elsewhere."[2]

Again, Jesus Christ becomes self-attesting and self-authenticating to the believing attitude. Jesus says: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Eternal life is a form of knowledge. It is not to be identified with some other forms of knowledge such as the knowledge derived from the investigation of physical causes. The latter would be of only secondary value for religion. The spiritual demonstration within the soul, which through the Holy Spirit, Jesus mediates to men, is wholly different. It is of religious value because it is different. In Ephesians 1:7-8, Paul speaks of the riches

[2] Mackintosh: *The Originality of the Christian Message*, p. 83.

of God's grace in Christ, "Wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." Grace abounds in knowledge because it opens the spiritual resources within men. It ministers forgiveness, spiritual renewal, reënforcement of will, reconciliation with God, peace and tranquillity, and abounding joy. It brings the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. It involves all the certainties contained in the contrast between weakness and power; between blindness and spiritual vision; between defeat and triumph; between sin and forgiveness; between despair and hope; between sadness and overflowing joy. A new spiritual universe with its relationships thus swims into our ken when we yield to Christ. The eternal life which he ministers thus becomes its own witness.

And this leads to the point that Jesus Christ makes religion autonomous and free. It is easy to see why the Christian faith stands undismayed amid modern assaults, when we keep in mind its self-authenticating power. It is not sustained by argument merely, although it can meet all objectors by the best of arguments. It does not depend primarily upon what men usually call a sound metaphysic, although it rests upon unassailable philosophical foundations. It has nothing but good will for all genuine scientific research, because it sees in the universe our Father's house, and the sphere of the operation of the divine will and purpose. But it does not depend upon scien-

tific research for its justification or vindication. Christians know in another way, none the less valid, none the less convincing. Our religion holds up its head among all the sister pursuits, all forms of human culture, as an equal. It bears its own credentials. It never can be judged by an alien principle, or driven into the cage made for its imprisonment by men who do not understand it. It will live in the open among the masses of men who appreciate it, welcome it, grasp its meaning and live and die by it.

It is in this connection that we learn how and in what sense Christ becomes our authority. He never imposes a yoke upon men against their will. "Take my yoke upon you" was his exhortation. It was to be a voluntary act. His yoke was to be freely chosen. Never was any doctrine imposed by mere external authority. Even in regard to his Messiahship he enjoined reserve and restraint upon his disciples in his earlier ministry. He wanted men to discern for themselves his significance. His revelations were to become their discoveries. "But who say ye that I am?" he asked upon a memorable occasion. Peter voiced the reply of the group around him: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:15-16).

Now this question and the answer are profoundly significant. They mark a crisis and turning point in the experience of the disciples. But more than this, they illustrate the method of Jesus. Faith in his Person, inspired by a volun-

tary spiritual choice of the disciple is the key to Christianity. Here Christ discloses the rock foundation of his Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. This is the secret of the power of the gospel. It is identical with what Paul says in Romans. The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). This I have already noticed. I refer to it again to show the close agreement between Jesus and Paul as to the place of the Person of Jesus in relation to our salvation. We may study Christianity as ethics, or as a social message, or as implying a certain philosophy, or we may study the religious consciousness of Jesus himself, without discovering the secret of the power of the gospel. The latter we cannot know except through personal and free choice of Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord. Not submission to ecclesiastical authority, not the imposition or acceptance of a set of propositions in the form of a creed, not the magic of sacraments administered by priests, not even the acceptance of the Bible in an external way—can release the spiritual energies of the Christian Religion. Personal acceptance of Christ as living Redeemer and Revealer of God the Father is the sole way of life and power. And this truth is inwrought in the very fiber of the New Testament. To take it away is to leave the New Testament in shreds. And with it no earthly power can ever shake the foundations of the New Testament. The history and the experience are indissolubly bound together.

Three results, from among others, I mention as following this voluntary acceptance of Christ. First, the believer is emancipated. A sense of freedom floods the soul. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). The bondage of sin is broken. Secondly, the man thus emancipated, at once rededicates his life and all his powers to the Christ who redeems. Paul called himself the bond-slave of Christ. He was divorced from the law and married to Christ. He was no longer the servant of sin, but the servant of righteousness through Christ. He was dead to sin and alive to Christ. These and many other forms of statement express the abounding joy and gratitude to Christ. (See Romans 6:1-20.) The hymnology of the Christian centuries bears witness to this same deep devotion to Jesus Christ, born of the experience of his redeeming grace and power.

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast,
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest."

So sang one with passionate devotion to Christ.

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
Let Angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all."

Thus sang another and millions of believers echo the sentiment every week in public worship.

The third result following the acceptance of Christ by faith is the transfer of his spiritual power to his people. In his prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John, Jesus says: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18), and in the great commission: "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and disciple all the nations . . . and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20). The measure of the power transferred to disciples was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Paul prays that the Ephesians might understand it, viz.: "What the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:14-20). The book of Acts is the story of that power in its earliest manifestation. "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).

From the preceding it is easy to understand the nature of Christ's authority for Christians. It is personal and spiritual and freely chosen. He becomes Lord of life and conduct for believers because of what he does in them and for them. In

him men find themselves and realize the end of their existence. Every other good is dwarfed in comparison with the life he brings. The Scriptures are authoritative for Christians because they are the witness to him, God's testimony regarding his Only Begotten Son. The New Testament perfectly mirrors the life and experience we know in Christ. Theories that the New Testament account of Christ is an echo of the mystery-cults, or the fantasies of fond disciples, totally miss the mark. Christians know that echoes and fantasies are not causes producing such effects. A spiritual Force which is as uniform and steady and reliable in the personal realm as is the power of gravitation in nature cannot be the echo of anything. It is the original and divine voice in man's religious life, speaking with the same regenerating energy as in the beginning.

CHAPTER XIV

THE IRREDUCIBLE CHRIST: IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

We must also glance at Christ's place in Christian history. There is no space for a full statement. But the task has been well performed. One can find an admirable account of what Christ has done for women and children, and slaves, for the sick, the oppressed and down-trodden, for improved laws, and for better relations between men in such a volume as *Gesta Christi,* by the late Loring Brace.

In Part IV of my *Why Is Christianity True?* the same theme has been developed in five chapters. So also there is a convincing chapter in Professor Glover's *The Jesus of History.* Dr. Glover portrays the elements of outward grandeur in the old religious life of the Roman Empire, its many gods, its stately ceremonial, its apparently imperishable strength. Then came the little group of obscure and despised Christians. One of them wrote an Apocalypse predicting the downfall of Rome, an absurdity to pagan contemporaries. "Yet," says Professor Glover, "the dream has come true, that church has triumphed. Where is the old religion? Christ has conquered, and all the gods have gone, utterly gone. They are memories now, and nothing more. Why did they go?

The Christian Church refused to compromise." Again: "The Christian proclaimed a war of religion in which there shall be no compromise, no peace, till Christ is Lord of all; the thing shall be fought out to the bitter end. And it has been. He was resolved that the old gods should go; and they have gone. How was it done? Here we touch what I think one of the greatest wonders that history has to show. . . . If we may invent, or adapt three words, the Christian 'outlived,' the pagan 'out-died' him, and 'out-thought' him."[1]

Do not forget that the power of Christianity as a regenerating moral and spiritual force has always depended upon keeping Christ central for faith, as in the New Testament preaching. A striking illustration is seen in the career of Savonarola as compared with that of Luther. Savonarola stands out as one of the moral heroes of Christian history. He preceded Luther a few years only. The same general conditions of a corrupt papacy, church and society existed for both. Both were men of tremendous personality and moral force and courage. Both had a passion for truth and righteousness. And yet Savonarola was burned at the stake and his movement failed. Its influence was obliterated like the trail of an ocean liner in the sea after the great ship has passed on. Luther's movement, on the other hand, changed the course of history. It is a mighty factor in the world to-day. Why the difference?

[1] Glover: *The Jesus of History,* pp. 212-213.

The answer is not difficult. Savonarola's was an effort for moral reform. Luther's was a religious movement. Savonarola attacked the current morals. He burned the Vanities in the streets of Florence. He wanted a civil government for the city with Christ as King. But he never sought to change or correct the religious foundations. Salvation through sacrament, priest and church, he accepted.

Martin Luther went forth and shook the world with a great religious principle: Justification by faith. He began with the fact of sin and man's need. He went to the New Testament for the remedy. He found there Christ as atoning Redeemer, risen and glorified. For him Christ was all in all as the Revealer of God. Trust in him brought divine forgiveness, and a new standing. The conscience was thus purged from dead works to serve the living God. Thus by restoring Christ to men seeking salvation and reaffirming the central truth of Paul's preaching he opened again the flood-gates of life eternal for mankind. The tide ebbed and flowed. There were many abuses. Many wars resulted. But to this day Protestantism has kept Christ central in its preaching and life.

The power of Christianity as a conquering force has always depended upon the centrality of Christ in the message. Where Christ grows dim in the vision of church or preacher, the Christian power wanes. Evangelism is vain and futile apart from

Christ as religious Object and Redeemer of men. Says Professor Glover: "Wherever the Christian church, or a single Christian, has put upon Jesus Christ a higher emphasis—above all where everything has been centered in Jesus Christ—there has been an increase of power for church, or community, or man." John Wesley and Whitefield and all the great evangelists have found this to be true. The great foreign missionary enterprise of modern times, as is well known, took its rise out of motives and incentives supplied by the evangelical faith. And it is yet to be shown that modern liberalism has in it the spiritual resources for such a movement.

One phase of current liberalism is its emphasis upon the ethical and social aspects of the gospel. But the ethical and social fruits of the gospel can only come when the moral and spiritual life of man is renewed and sustained by the power of a redeeming Christ. From the beginning of the Reformation era the ethical and social fruits of the evangelical faith have been manifest. John Calvin's ideal and passion sought a perfect society at Geneva. Righteousness in all relations of life was implicit in his theology. Puritanism in the British Isles was a marvelous ethical and social manifestation of the new faith. The Puritan Revolution under Cromwell showed the dynamic power of the gospel for political reform and for a restoration of human rights. The conscience and will of John Knox became the vehicle of a

divine purpose manifesting itself on a wide social scale. The Puritan and Pilgrim migration to America, and the new commonwealths established here, were direct social fruits of the evangelical faith. The abolition of slavery, and a hundred other reforms bear witness to the same truth. To-day there are two supreme questions seeking solution. One is the adjustment of industrial, the other the improvement of international relations. These are momentous problems which must be solved. The resources, moral and spiritual, for the solution are to be found only in the faith of the New Testament.

Many men are reckoning with new mechanical adjustments of human relations to cure these ills. Some imagine that material progress alone is sufficient. But we are seeing with increasing clearness that the supreme factor is the spiritual. Science may give us new engines of power. We may invent new political machinery for world peace. These may be good or bad. But they will not be good unless operated by good men. A circular saw is a marvel of efficiency. But it will cut a human body in twain as easily as a log of wood. Our improved social and scientific mechanisms may destroy society as well as improve it. The true prophet to-day knows that a regenerate heart is the key to social progress.

A most interesting phase of Christ's present power in the world is the way he is influencing modern thought. Directly or indirectly, con-

sciously or unconsciously, men are gravitating to him for their ultimate ideas. In modern education the worth and value and rights of personality control the best thought. In political life the common man with his value and his rights is the underlying ideal. Christ taught these truths to men and enforced them as never before. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Professor Ely has declared that the teachings of Christ in the parable of the talents contain the key to the proper solution of the economic problems of our day. In the realm of philosophic and speculative thought it is striking to note how great thinkers borrow from Jesus and the gospel, even when they repudiate them. Modern Pragmatism insists that the will is an essential factor in the knowing process; that the test of a truth is its workableness. Jesus announced this principle in religion when he declared that he that willeth to do the will of God should know the doctrine. Knowledge comes through doing. Albrecht Ritschl founded a school of theology on the doctrine borrowed from Kant, that we cannot know things in themselves, but only in their manifestations. We know God in and through Christ, but cannot and need not know who or what Christ was in his essential nature. Thus Ritschl sought to protect himself from scientific attack by silence on the offensive phases of Christian truth. In the end this is a fatal pro-

ceeding, as history has shown. But he retained the New Testament truth that we know God only through Christ.

William James in a remarkable study of religious experience reaches the conclusion that there is a divine and genuinely miraculous power which regenerates men. But he remains agnostic as to whether Christ is the cause or not. He also defines the conditions under which the divine life flows into the human. It is self-renunciation and self-surrender on man's part, whereupon there supervenes the inflow of divine and spiritual power. Professor Eucken, while willing to dispense with Christ himself, nevertheless borrows a Christian idea as the central truth of his philosophy. Man can find no means of overcoming the conflicts and contradictions of this temporal life until he comes into contact with the transcendent life of God. Such contact resolves the contradictions and gives man victory. Thus Eucken constructs the spiritual foundations of his system upon Christ's doctrine of the new birth, while rejecting the Author of the doctrine. So also, modern idealism, in representatives like Professor Green and others, takes over the Christian conception of incarnation and atonement, while repudiating the historic incarnation and atonement in Christ. The life of God is an act of eternal sacrifice. The principle of incarnation, atonement, resurrection, ascension, is a true and sound thought of God's life and activity. But it is a

universal principle. There was no special manifestation of it in the career of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus idealism cuts loose from history and fact and builds a structure high in the air, from materials borrowed from our historic faith. It goes to the very heart of Christianity for its formative principle, but leaves Christianity itself a vapor ready to vanish.

Professor Josiah Royce in his work, *The Problem of Christianity,* adopts as central in his philosophy of religion, the words of the creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints." Or as he expresses it elsewhere, it is the ideal of one of the Pauline Churches of the New Testament: The Holy Spirit in the blessed community.[2] Out of this conception Professor Royce develops man's relations to God and to other men. In the ideal he finds the goal of history and the secret of the spiritual universe. But the Spirit is substituted for Christ. He makes this very rash statement: "The name of Christ has always been, for the Christian believers, the symbol for the Spirit in whom the faithful—that is to say the loyal—always are and have been one."[3] An idealist easily sublimates the facts of history into the rational principles with which he works. One can scarcely understand otherwise the statement that Christ has always been taken as a "Symbol for

[2] See Royce, *The Problem of Christianity,* Vol. II, p. 12.
[3] *Ibid.,* p. 426.

the Spirit." Professor Royce denies that we can know Christ. "The existing documents are too fragmentary. The historical hypotheses are too shifting and evanescent."[4] Now Professor Royce, although thus denying the historical Christ, says: "The literal and historical fact has always been this, that in some fashion and degree, those who have thus believed in the being whom they called Christ, were united in a community of the faithful, were in love with that community, were hopefully and practically devoted to the cause of the still invisible, but perfectly real and divine Universal Community, and were saved by the faith and by the life which they thus expressed."[5]

Thus we obtain an idea of the wonder-working magic of a philosophical principle in the hands of a skillful thinker. Faith in Christ the unifying bond; the church itself the community; the blessed community expressing and manifesting the divine life, and foreshadowing the goal of the spiritual history of mankind. But, mark you, the central object of the faith, Jesus Christ, unknown and unknowable. When one recalls what was quoted on an earlier page from Professor Royce, that every philosophy is simply a new insight from a new angle, one wonders at the dogmatic confidence of his conclusions in the last chapter of his book. When one recalls the terrific assaults upon this and other idealistic systems by Professor James and the pluralists, one wonders how stable Pro-

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 427. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 425.

fessor Royce's conclusions are. And particularly when one observes how he plays fast and loose with history and the name of Christ, one is relieved of any dread that such a theory will long endure.

At the same time, Professor Royce's theory illustrates strikingly how "modern thought" borrows from Jesus. "The Holy Spirit in the Blessed Community" is indeed a blessed fact. But so is the Christ who is and has been and ever will be the center of the faith of the members of the blessed community.

Thus it appears that modern thought even among those who come short of full appreciation of Christ borrows freely from him. In ethics and economics his influence is most palpable. But so also Pragmatism with its doctrine of the will; Ritschlianism with its judgment of value; James with his doctrine of miraculous conversion; Eucken with his philosophy of the new birth; and Royce with his doctrine of incarnation and atonement and the church are all indebted to Jesus for the leading ideas of their systems. He cannot be evaded or escaped.

This volume has not dealt formally with questions of doctrine. I have discussed Christian doctrine in my work, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression.* The purpose here has been to make clear the issue now before the religious world. Fundamentally it is an issue as to the facts of Christian history, and the facts of Chris-

tian experience. A doctrine of incarnation, of sin and atonement, of the deity of Christ, of regeneration and justification and so on through the great circle, is implicit in all that has been said. But the strength of the Christian position is the stability of the foundations in the New Testament records, the deeds of Christ in history, and the experience of redemption through his power. Doctrines are inevitable as arising out of these facts. Indeed a statement of many of the facts is virtually the statement of the doctrines. But for the purposes in view in the present discussion, formal doctrinal discussion has not been necessary.

The impregnable citadel of the evangelical faith is the Fact of Jesus Christ, with all that the name implies. Dr. Fairbairn has pointed out with great force that it is easy to adopt a premise which will enable us to disprove the evangelical position in two ways, by rational logic, and by analytical criticism. Rational logic may show to its own satisfaction the inconsistencies or absurdities of the early definitions of Christ's Person in the Nicene and Chalcedonian decisions. So also analytical criticism may theoretically reconstruct the New Testament records and change their import in a radical way. But even so, the real problem has not been faced. The facts concerning Christ, and the ideas to be construed are infinitely more complex than the premise in each of these instances was allowed to express. The argument seemed strong because

the premise was narrow. Says Dr. Fairbairn: "We have not solved, we have not even stated and defined, the problem as to the person of Christ when we have written the life of Jesus, for that problem is raised even less by the Gospels than by Christ's place and function in the collective history of man; or, to be more correct, by the life described in the Gospels and the phenomena represented by universal history viewed in their reciprocal and interpretative interrelations. . . . The very essence of the matter is that the Gospels do not stand alone, but live, as it were, embosomed in universal history. And in that history Christ plays a part much more remarkable and much less compatible with common manhood than the part Jesus plays in the history of his own age and people. And we have not solved, or even apprehended, any one of the problems connected with this Person until we have resolved the mystery of the place he has filled and the things he has achieved in the collective life of man."[6]

American Protestantism numbers between twenty-five and thirty millions of members. Each group is organized and militant. Innumerable enterprises, missionary, social, civic, philanthropic, are conducted by these bodies. They are the fountain of benevolence for all great appeals. They are the ethical and social centers of life and power. They are teachers of patriotism and also the love

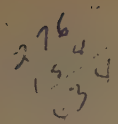
[6] A. M. Fairbairn: *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, pp. 12-14.

of humanity. They live to serve. There are qualifications, of course, shortcomings, inconsistencies, failures. But there is overwhelming proof of the main proposition. Now these great groups are founded on the evangelical faith. Christ is central. His deity and atonement are believed in. His relation to man's faith is recognized. In millions of lives it is being demonstrated every day that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Consider then the irreducible Christ. He is irreducible in the experience of saved men. He is irreducible in the New Testament records. He is irreducible in the centuries of Christian history. He is irreducible in his ministry to the larger spiritual life of the world. He is irreducible as the inspirer of a better social and economic system, and better international relations. He is irreducible as the goal and inspiration of the higher thought of the age. He is irreducible as the moral and spiritual dynamic enabling the world to realize its ideals. He is above all irreducible as the eternal Son of God and Saviour of men, sinless, crucified for our sins, risen from the dead, reigning in glory, and destined to come again in his own time.

Now if modern naturalism, or liberalism, imagines it can cut away the great features of this world-conquering faith and reduce it to proportions which will fit into the narrow cage of physical continuity, it is open to it to make the effort.

If men believe they can sweep this ocean out of its bed, or remove this Matterhorn from its base, or turn back the current of this Gulf Stream in the ocean of man's religious life, let them try. But at the same time let them remember that they are primarily fighting not a system of doctrine, or any particular form of doctrinal propaganda. They are fighting life itself, at its deepest and most significant level; the life that is in Jesus Christ, whom men know as Redeemer and Lord, as the completion and realization of the religious ideal, who is made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.



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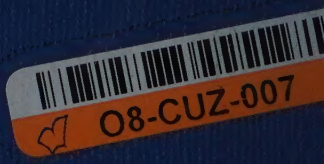
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